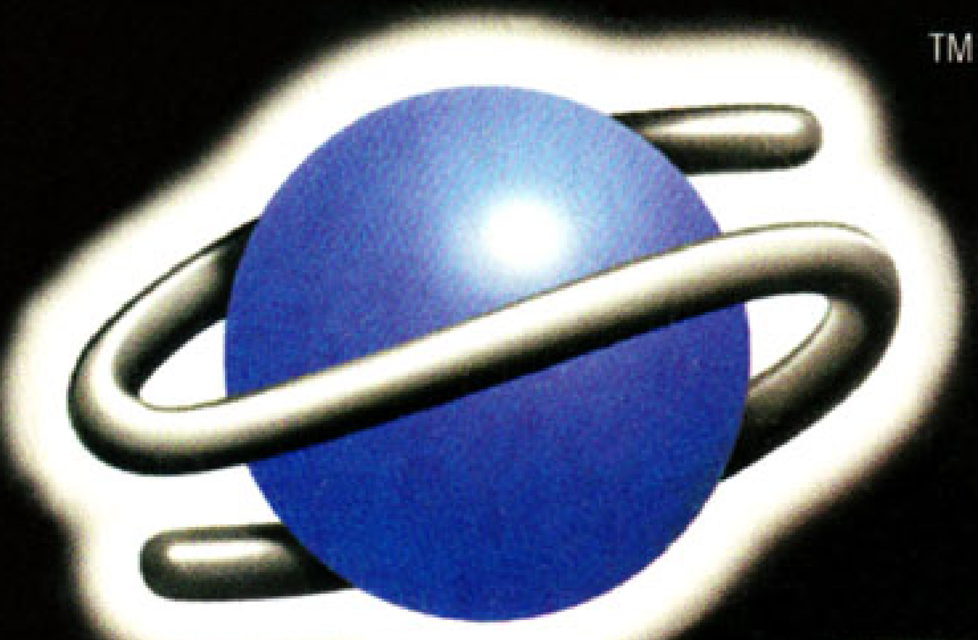
THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE





SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA No.1 FOR SATURN

ISSUE 20 £2.75
JUNE 1997





YOU WANT TO PLAY DIRTY?

LAST BRONX

EXCLUSIVE!

AM3 WONDERGAME LOOKS SERIOUSLY SEXY...

QUAKE

UNBELIEVABLE SCREENSHOTS YOU MUST SEE...

SONIC'S BACK

WITH 3D GRAPHICS TO DIE FOR!

PLUS! SHINING THE HOLY ARK: BRILLIANT! FIGHTERS MEGAMIX: FULL UK REVIEW! MECHWARRIOR II PANDEMONIUM ACTUA SOCCER JONAH LOMU RUGBY METAL SLUG

INDEPEND



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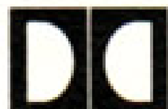
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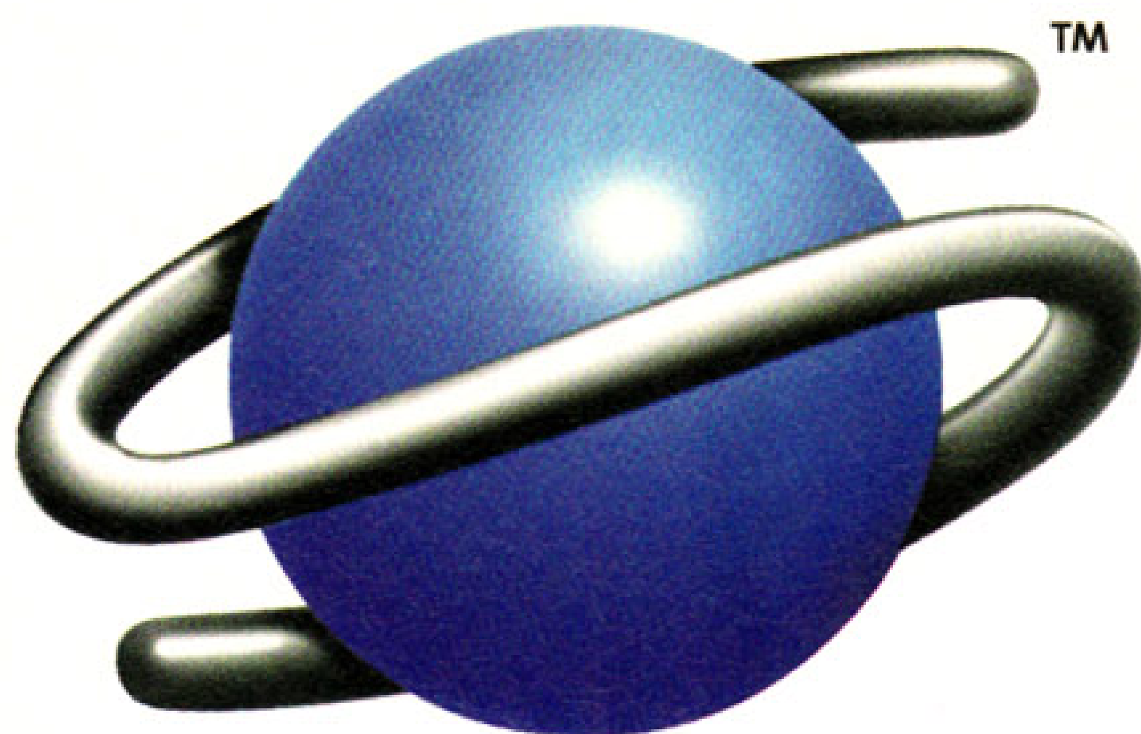
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NEWS

The Tokyo Game Show was hailed as one of the most important videogames events in recent years and Sega emerged triumphant with the hottest quality games. Last Bronx, Grandia, Touring Car and Panzer RPG showed the world that when it comes to great games, you can't beat Sega. And there's more to come: Sega stole the show without even showing anything of Virtua Fighter 3 or Project Sonic - the two games that EVERYONE wants to see, regardless of which machine they actually own. Hopefully all will be revealed at this year's E3 show in Atlanta - yet another huge event that Sega are bound to dominate. Have Sony truly won? From the sheer quality that Sega have revealed so far, it's clear that the game is far from over.

Richard Leadbetter,
Editor.



3D GRAPHICS TO DIE FOR...

SONIC'S BACK!!!

A NEW AGE OF SATURN EXCELLENCE BECKONS







We've seen it in action and believe us when we say these graphics are of Mario 64 quality!

The Tokyo Game Show Spring '97 was held at the "Tokyo Big Site" from Friday April 4th to Sunday April 6th. Our man in Japan, Warren Harrod, was there to bring SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE readers the very latest gaming news and gossip.

As possibly the largest computer game show in the world there were over 100 companies exhibiting a total of 500 titles which were almost all playable on the 1200 consoles available for those lucky enough to get in. Over 120,000 gamers managed to make it despite the pouring rain and the truly mile-long queues. For Saturn owners the show promised to be full of surprises and Sega certainly didn't disappoint. Throughout the day, some of Japan's greatest game designers/ programmers were live on stage at the Sega booth to talk about their latest projects and what a line-up they had! Without a doubt some of the most impressive games coming out this year will be on the Saturn and just like Sega's stage theme said: "This is cool!" These were the main game announcements:

PROJECT SONIC

The biggest news of the show! Despite gossip that Project Sonic was the name of Sonic Team's next game it is in fact something much bigger. Project Sonic is a major project throughout the whole of Sega and will involve much more than simply just another new game. Mr Yuji Naka was at the show to explain a little about this new project.

Phase 1 of Project Sonic is Sonic Jam, a compilation of several old Sonic games that have been combined with a new 3D Sonic World. The games included are Sonic the Hedgehog, Sonic the Hedgehog 2, Sonic the Hedgehog 3 and Sonic and Knuckles. However, these classic Megadrive title aren't simple ports as there have been several improvements. For example, you can now do a Time Attack on every stage, a Spin Dash can be done even on Sonic 1, there's a special mode where you can just play the special stages and the "Lock-On System" (which used the extra cart) has been included as well.

As if this news wasn't exciting



Hardly any clipping! Sonic's looking awesome!



enough, the addition of the 3D Sonic World impressed all who saw it. Although not strictly a game in itself, this section of Sonic Jam is essentially a 3D polygon world where you can move Sonic around a large valley with bridges, trees, a river and a variety of other features. There's no pop-up or glitching and even though Sonic seems to have taken a leaf out of Mario 64's book, the sheer smoothness and potential of this section will astound all Saturn owners. In this world you can activate a kind of "Digital Manual" (a similar feature was used in the PlayStation Namco Museum series) which gives you information about various aspects of the Sonic world. From the entire Sonic CD FMV intro to sounds and artwork this additional section looks set to be the ultimate Sonic archive. Sonic Jam was about 88% complete at the show.

The main reason for Sonic Jam being developed is to introduce Sonic to the many new gamers who have never really known this character. By releasing this compilation Sega hope to build up interest in Sonic before they reveal Phase 2 towards the end of the year.



As well as the stunning new museum, Sonic Jam also features a hot rendered intro.



Choose from Sonics 1 to 3, Sonic and Knuckles or utilise the latter game's lock-on modes!



The real draw of Sonic Jam is the full-on conversions of the original Megadrive games!

SEGA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

This was not playable at the show (it's only 5% done) although it should be ready for the E3 show in America in June. Although it isn't known at this time just who is undertaking the Saturn conversion, we do know that the assistant producer in charge of the project is from AM Annex so you can be sure it's going to be great!

A small amount of video footage showed the Saturn version of Touring Car in action and only a small drop in frame rate and resolution made this look any different from the arcade version! No CPU cars had been included at this point, but as we said... it's only 5% done. Touring Car is confirmed as one of Sega's big guns for E3 so look out for our report coming soon!

LAST BRONX

Continuing Sega's domination of the Tokyo Game Show, the company showe d the first work on their conversion of the eagerly awaited Last Bronx. This game manages to capture the imagination of newcomers with its stylish visuals as well as satisfy the gamers with its depth of play. Regardless, the Saturn version looked absolutely spectacular, combining the hi-res visuals of Virtua Fighter 2 with the walls of Fighting Vipers... a major achievement for the Saturn. AM3 also announced that all of the backgrounds would be 3D as well - something that neither the Saturn or PlayStation has achieved before.

Last Bronx is going to be a major release... and you can get the inside track on this hot game by turning to page 14 right NOW!



3D backgrounds and amazing hi-res visuals!



Expect a major Bronx announcement soon!

ENTER... THE GAME DESIGNER NETWORK

GD-Net is a Japanese association of the hottest Saturn coding teams, headed up by Treasure and Game Arts, responsible for the likes of Guardian Heroes and Gun Griffon respectively. Their new games look even hotter as you shall see...

GRANDIA

This is the game that EVERYONE is talking about - the role-playing game destined to out-Final Fantasy Final Fantasy VII! The game was on display in video form only at the Game Show, but looked absolutely sensational. What Grandia was doing with real-time 3D eclipsed the FMV sections of Final Fantasy!

As readers of SSM should know, Grandia brings together George Lucas's Skywalker sound with Game Arts' very greatest 3D technicians. Add a host of games designers and you have what should be the best adventure game ever. We're talking super-smooth (around 30 frames per second) textured visuals, along with every 3D effect ever seen - brilliant lighting, transparencies, the works!

Game Arts are releasing a demo of the game some time soon in Japan in a similar to ploy to Square with Final Fantasy VII, so we should get a look at this in action really soon.









Grandia's visuals are the best seen in any RPG ever. FACT!

GUN GRIFFON RETURNS!

The under-rated Gun Griffon returns to the Saturn in what promises to be a spectacular videogame. Take the original, add in 30fps visuals with gouraud shading and light-sourcing, mix in four different mechs to control along with link-up cable action and you should have some idea of how cool this game will be! We've got high hopes for this one...

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

This is a name that should gladden the hearts of the Saturn's staunchest fans. This game is only the follow-up to Guardian Heroes - a sprite based action festival from Treasure - the masters of the 2D game! Silhouette Mirage is basically an even more lunatic rendition of their already classic Gunstar Heroes and looks like being one of the most spectacular blasting games ever!







CAPCOM UNLEASH THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Capcom's booth was the second best booth at the show. Designed around the theme of Rockman (or Megaman as he's known in the West), Capcom paid tribute to their star character's 10th Anniversary. Rockman first debuted way back on December 17th 1987 on the Famicom. Since then he's spawned several series on myriad systems. Capcom are making sure he's keeping busy...



ROCKMAN X4

With possibly the greatest graphics you've ever seen, this has to be the best version yet of any Rockman game. With two characters to control along with some absolutely gorgeous graphics, Rockman X4 finally brings the character into the 32-bit generation!

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

We've had to wait a long time but it's finally here. Although still at an early stage, Saturn owners were finally able to play a semi-complete version of one of the most highly anticipated arcade conversions of all time. There's good news and bad news. The good tidings are that the game plays identically to the arcade - even though the game was only 50% complete, it managed to replicate even the most sublime air combo! The bad news is that a fair amount of the coin-op's animation was missing. Back to the good news: for starters, it's better than the PlayStation version with bigger characters and more animation, and it's also compatible with the RAM cart used to power Metal Slug, Cyberbots and King of Fighters '96 - meaning that most of the lost animation is reclaimed if you have the technology! This game's looking very hot and we hope to have a full feature next month.









SUPER ADVENTURE ROCKMAN

A combination of high quality animation and gripping adventure game action. The game features three stories containing a total of 90 minutes of original anime. Depending on your choices at certain points in the story there are different events and plots. Over 20 boss characters make an appearance.

RESIDENT EVIL UPDATE

A 50% complete version was on display and it was looking pretty hot indeed. Saturn owners shouldn't have anything to complain about when this horrorfest arrives at home. The frame rate's there, the gameplay's there... although the proposed enhancements Capcom are putting in are not... yet! More news soon!

CULDCEPT

Culdcept is a fantasy boardgame based on the increasingly popular trading card system for 1-4 players. With over 300 cards available, eight CPU opponents with AI, incredibly well-animated graphics and a full orchestra score, this game has already been well received by the gaming community in Japan. Although the game is quite involved, the basics are simple. There are three types of card, creature, spell and item. By "rolling the dice" you move the required number of spaces until you land on the final square. Depending on that square you either have to fight, trade or perform some other action depending on the type of encounter or event you are in.Culdcept is looking pretty good. Now for the bad news - this is exactly the type of game that doesn't usually make it to the UK. After all we're still waiting for the much vaunted Dragon Force...

SCORCHER!

"It's quality gameplay that makes MechWarrior 2
a must have title ...

... A supremely satisfying strategy shoot 'em up."

89% Sega Saturn Magazine

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Sega are planning some BIG things for the release of Fighters MegaMix in the UK. We've been hyping this brilliant title for months now - and with good reason, it being one of the greatest 3D fighting games the world has ever seen! With its 32 characters and backgrounds and its stunning mixture of Virtua Fighter 2 and 3 along with Fighting Vipers, it's a frankly unmissable piece of software... unmissable enough for us to award the game with a gargantuan 95% review score. Check out page 60 for the full review and the first critical appreciation of the mega PAL version! Still, to business. Sega Europe have teamed up with ace retailers Game and SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE to bring this excellent offer to our faithful readers. The basic message is: buy MegaMix from Game, present the attached voucher (below) and get yourself a brand new Virtua Stick for a piffling £14.99 - that's a fiver LESS expensive than an ordinary Sega joypad and a massive £25.00 off the recommended retail price. As well as swanky autofire features and what-have-you, the Virtua Stick is a bit of all right mostly down its excellent buttons and arcade-style joystick. Modelled after the hardware you get attached to arcade cabinets, it really is a Virtua-l giveaway at the price!





DYNAMITE BASEBALL ANNOUNCED

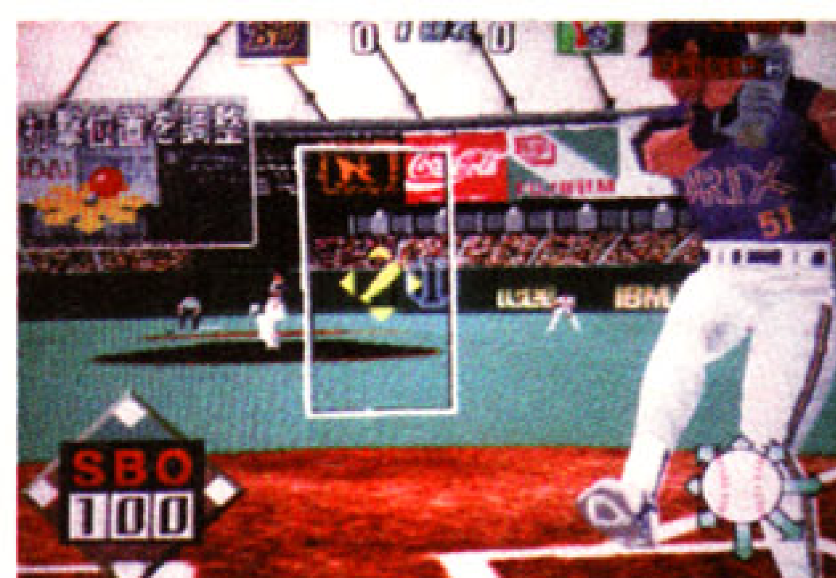
Sega Amusements recently held a press launch in Japan to celebrate the arrival of two new games in the arcades as well as to announce an all-new project. Dynamite Baseball '97 is an all-new creation from the currently hot AM1 (responsible for the bur-illiant House of the Dead which SSM recommends you go out and play NOW). Dynamite Baseball runs on the Model 2 board and is quite possibly the best representation of the sport we've seen to date. What is quite interesting is the implementation of the cabinet - there's a kind of swingable bat you can use to put power on the ball as it's chucked at you. Good stuff. Look out for more in Coin-Operated soon!



AM1 are really boosting their rep with...



... games like House of the Dead.



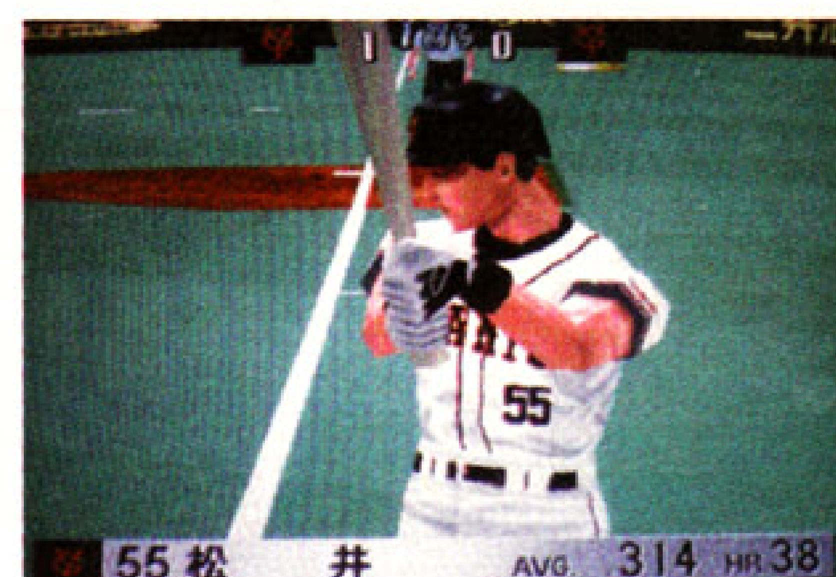
Aha! This'll be when you're pitching!



A smashing hit, you might say!



If I could just reach...



Can you get that elusive home run?

TACTICS FORMULA ONE

Take all the thrills and spills of Formula One racing action and combine them with all the precision and strategy of a board game and you have the most incredible Grand Prix game ever! Up to four players can enjoy this incredible game of tactical driving by configuring their car's driving patterns, equipping the car with better parts and by studying the car's performance on the analysis screen. Each circuit is split up into about 30 blocks which can each be configured for how you want your vehicle to perform. Players program their cars by inputting when to accelerate, when to brake and how to take each corner. When all the cars have been set up, the computer uses this data to run the match and the cars drive following the inputted data. By analysing the results of the race you can correct bad choices by reconfiguring until you have mastered the perfect driving set-up. There are 21 stages available and various other elements such as weather and pit stops are also included. Little touches like reproducing the accidents as CG movie make this a lot of fun too!



This actually more like a board game...



... Albeit one with ace graphics!

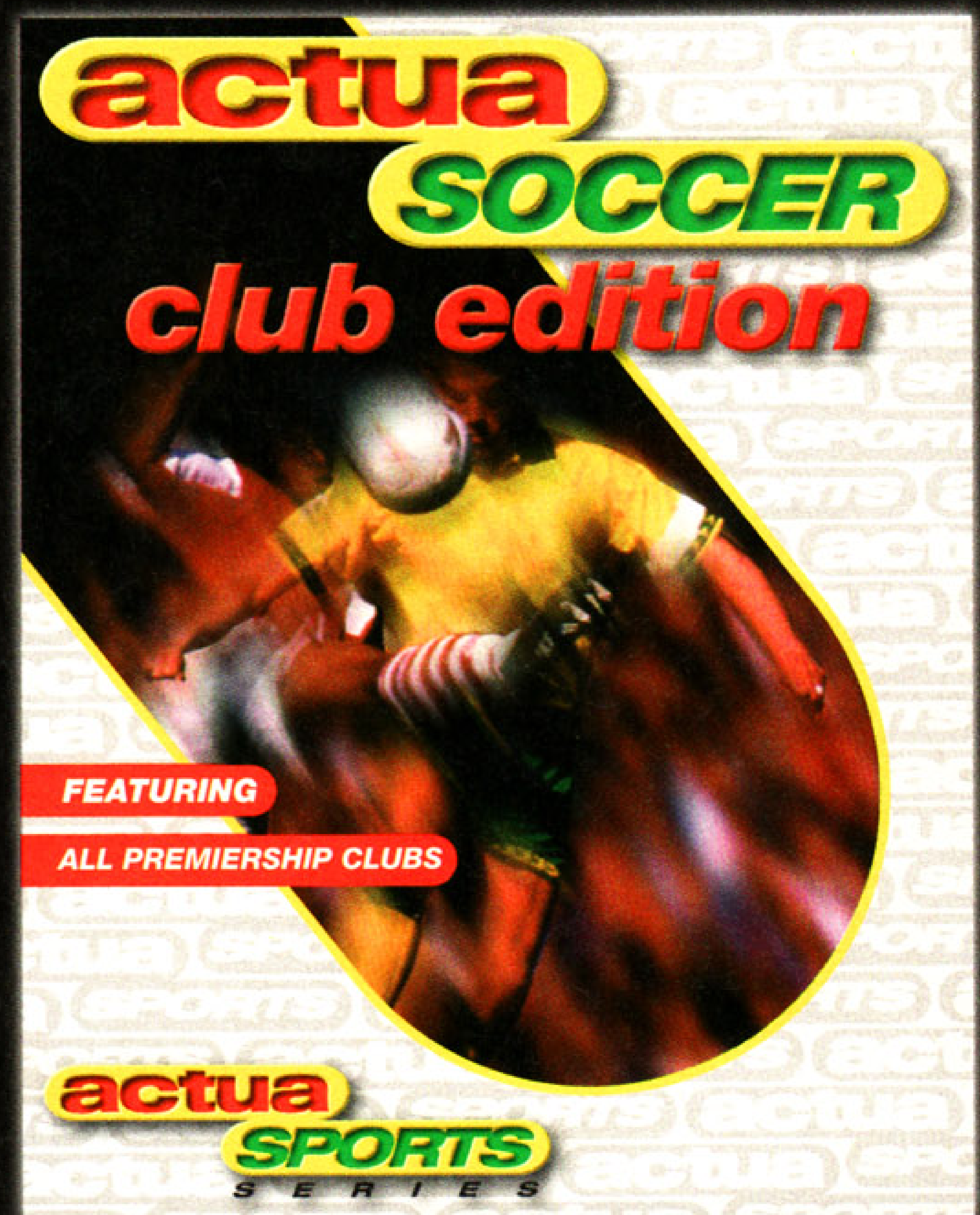
now you can play your premier team

Actua Soccer is universally recognised as the greatest football game ever. Here is just one of many testimonials:

"The best footy game around. It's almost like playing the real thing. Beautiful."

Five Star Rating - Essential Playstation

Now with Actua Soccer Club Edition, as well as all the action and authenticity of the original, you can play your favourite Premier League side with new live interactive commentary from football's finest, Barry Davies.













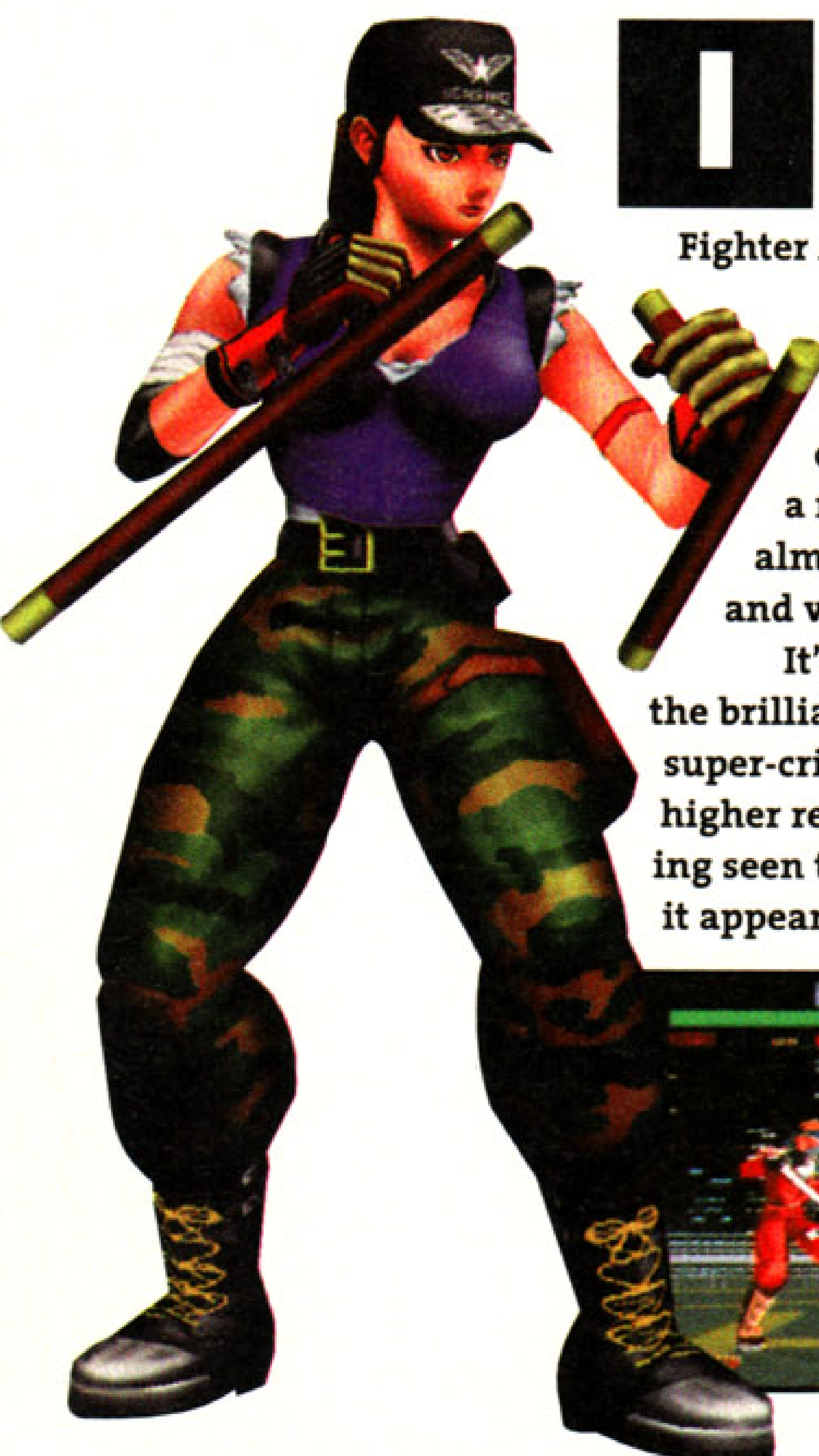


actua SPORTS SERIES



LAST BRONX

AM3 have got a tough act to follow. After the triumphs of Virtua Fighter 2, Fighting Vipers and Fighters MegaMix, you might think that AM2 had cornered the beat 'em up market. But as RICH LEADBETTER discovers, there's far more to Last Bronx than meets the eye... as shall become apparent over the next few months.



It's a documented fact that the Saturn is blessed with some of the best fighting games in both the 2D and 3D arenas, Capcom owning the former with Street Fighter Alpha 2 and AM2 clearly in command of the latter - as Fighters MegaMix shows this month as it finally receives a UK release. For something to come along and upset AM2's dominance of the genre, we're really looking for a really cool videogame. One that surpasses the almighty Virtua Fighter 2 in style, depth, gameplay and visual excellence.

It's undoubtedly going to be a tough task, considering the brilliance of VF2 with its arcade-perfect gameplay and super-crisp high-resolution visuals (which are actually of a higher resolution than the Model 2 arcade original), but having seen the early work that's been put into AM3's Last Bronx, it appears we could well have a winner on our hands...






US AIR FORCE



Nagi sends Tommy flying in this shot of hardcore martial arts action from the Saturn rendition of Last Bronx.



Not since the days of Virtua Fighter 2 have we seen a technical showcase in this league in the fighting game genre!



THE BASICS

Last Bronx appeared a good 15 months after Virtua Fighter 2 (which still ruled the 3D fighting scene at the time) and was a clear attempt by AM3 to do something different. In terms of look and feel, the firm decided to steer well clear to the heavy martial arts background of VF and instead take their game to the streets of modern day Tokyo, with their protagonists sporting the clothes and the attitude of the Japanese gang street fighters.

Another clear difference is AM3's introduction of weaponry to the 3D fighting game. Sais, tonfa, mallets and nunchuka are just a few of the deadly tools of the trade you can get expect to see in Last Bronx, making for a totally different experience.

Although hand-to-hand fighting is still clearly in evidence (and the game uses the same joystick and three button control system as Virtua Fighter), the overall look and feel is as different as you can get from the wonders of VF. Similarly, the combination system that Last Bronx uses is a lot, lot different to the AM2 mode of play - even more pinpoint accuracy is required.

This was a problem for AM2 in Fighting Vipers and Virtua Fighter 2, and AM3 are having similar problems porting their system across with Last Bronx. Says Mr Akinobu Abe, Last Bronx Director for AM3, "I'd say that getting the game mechanics and the collision detection right is the most difficult problem we're facing right now. As Last Bronx used weapons, when compared to hand-to-hand fighting games, the whole process is that more difficult as weapons have more calculations attached to it. But we're more or less on top of the problem now."



Although the Saturn version of Last Bronx is only 30% complete at this stage, AM3 have already managed to get all of the gameplay across from the coin-op with no problems. All of the arcades aerial combinations are in and working perfectly!

AWESOME GRAPHICAL CAPABILITIES

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has seen Last Bronx in action and has come away very impressed with what the AM3 team (who also did the arcade original) have done with the Saturn's technology. The smoothness and fluidity of the game is frankly amazing, as smooth of Virtua Fighter 2, running at 60 frames per second.

The amount of detail on the characters is also extremely impressive, a factor that Mr Abe concentrated heavily on from the word go: "As the Last Bronx characters are very popular, we have to pay a lot of attention to all of the characters down to the smallest of details. For example, if the face and the body of the characters are slightly different we'd never be forgiven. We want











Although only four characters are in the current demo, Last Bronx is already looking amazing!

THE BRONXERS

Gang leaders aim to bring an end to Tokyo urban warfare by joining together for a big fight tournament. The winner of the competition claims the Tokyo undeground as their prize! Here are the combatants.

TOMMY

Although he's into thrash metal and snowboarding, this juvenile gang leader is a master of the Battle Stick. A great long range combatant with amazing stick-related agility. Has a love-hate relationship with Lisa (she's got the hate end).

JOE

Formerly number two in the Soul Crew posse, Joe's a charismatic leader who formed his own gang. He uses his nunchuka in his right hand and karate power with his left. Expect the nunchuka to change for the UK version of the Saturn game!

KUROSAWA

A mysterious fellow without doubt, no-one knows his background. And no-one asks... unless they want a wooden sword to their features! A truly frightening opponent, Kurosawa has an awesome level of accuracy and power!

LISA

Armed with steel double sticks (one for each hand), Lisa has a cute high school cheerleader look countered by her sheer power and skill with her weaponry. Her skills allow her multiple attacks at high speed combined with deft footwork. >>





As you can see, the graphics in the Saturn rendition of Last Bronx look absolutely spectacular – finally we have a game to match the visual splendour of Virtua Fighter 2! This looks ace!



AM3 have seemingly done the impossible by combining the hi-res visuals of VF2 with brilliant 3D backgrounds - a real first!



>> to have the face and body to look as one."

But the real coup has to be with the backgrounds, which are shaping up to be full 3D objects are opposed to the parallax 2D scrolling playfields of Virtua Fighter 2 and Fighting Vipers. A brilliant technical achievement for sure, but since only two backgrounds have been made their way into the game (and these are far from complete), we're going to reserve judgment until we see a more complete version of the game.

However, Mr Abe is more than confident about his team's skills. "I think amongst the Saturn beat 'em up conversions to date, Last Bronx stands along with the best. For example, let's take the visual aspect. The method used to be to take the game apart bit by bit but with Last Bronx we're doing it just a little bit differently. Previously we were always strict about the compatibility of the 'feel' of the visuals and the solidity of the 3D, but now we'd like to think in terms of characters and backdrops."

If all of his plans come to fruition, this approach may well produce the closest Model 2 arcade conversion we've seen to date, no mean feat considering the wealth of excellent translations available.

THE GAME SHOW DEMO

As you can see in our news section this month, Last Bronx along with Panzer RPG and Project Sonic turned out to be one of the biggest draws of the Tokyo Toy Show. AM3 released a special demo version of the game (from which these screenshots come) which featured four characters and two backgrounds. "All the four characters have their special moves and throws in place," commented Mr Abe, clearly impressed with the work his team had done. "Compared to the arcade version, we're 30% into development". Note the comparison to the arcade version... AM3 are actually planning BIG things to make Last Bronx more than just another arcade conversion.

Last Bronx went down really well with the delegates at the Tokyo Game Show - once again it became clear that the AM departments have once again done the impossible: bringing an arcade machine with thousands of pounds' worth of 3D technology inside successfully to the relatively humble £170 Sega Saturn!

Although 30% might not seem like much of the game completed, you can rest assured that the game will be available sooner than you think. Work is progressing at a frighteningly fast rate and the Japanese version should be complete by the end of May, ready for a July release. An early September European release is now looking likely, further bolstering Sega Europe's already super-impressive fourth quarter line-up of Saturn produce. Things are looking up!



The close-up victory poses are most excellent indeed, showing off the high-res visuals to excellent effect!



YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET!

One thing to point out now: what you see this month is just the tip of the iceberg. AM3 have some huge Last Bronx-related surprises "coming atcha" over the next few months and you can trust SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE to reveal all. This game is shaping up really well and is going to surprise a lot of people.

We've been sworn to secrecy on this issue, but we can reveal that AM3 are planning to market Last Bronx in a totally different way to the way that Sega and AM2 handled the other arcade conversions. AM3's take is that the game is aimed at more of a mass-market audience that the diehard gamers who took to the Virtua Fighter series. This isn't just limited to the way you see the game via the media - AM3 are enhancing the game quite unlike any other arcade game conversion before it.

Says Akinobu Abe, "I can't tell you exactly what we're doing yet but there is going to be some quite decent extras within the game. Two things that are constantly on our minds is; one: the fact that compared to other fighting games, Last Bronx has quite a large female following and two: many people started playing fighting games because of Last Bronx. So to cater to these two groups we're aiming to add some new modes in the Saturn version so these players can enjoy the game. Besides these, we're planning to add something that's really great but that's still a secret."

The mind reels as to what Mr Abe is referring to, but he would undoubtedly have seen the success of other coin-op conversions such as Soul Edge which have added Expert Player modes and pseudo-RPG modes to the basic fighting game. From what little we know, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE understands that AM3 are being far more ambitious in their conversion. Let's just leave at that for the time being...

Suffice to say: Last Bronx is going to be one of the closest arcade conversions yet... and then some! Having experienced the game in its 30% complete form we're already extremely excited about it. More updates are due in a forthcoming edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. Stay tuned: this is going to be big!





How AM3 have managed to get the backgrounds in 3D as well as the fighters (and in high res!) is frankly a miracle which bodes well for VF3!

NAGI
Leader of the women-only gang Dogma, Nagi views all men as pawns to be controlled! A hysterical sadist at heart, she has a pair of Sais used to deadly ends, with stabbing and parrying attacks. Strangely drawn to the boyish Yoko...

YUSAKU
Leader of the Neo Soul gangland crew, he is the hero of Last Bronx. He uses a staff split into three sections for his attacks, allowing him to strike with power at just about any range. Also a master of the shoulder tackle and one of the best fighters.

YOKO
Almost manly in her posture, looks and attacking power, Yoko uses a pair of tonfa for her bloody fights. A powerful fighter, Yoko is further driven to victory by an indomitable spirit... as well as an unbeatable range of lethal kicks!

ZAIMOKU
One of the most distinctive fighters in the game, Zaimoku fights with an enormous lump-hammer style weapon which hits with unbelievable power! He is more interested in protecting his workers than he is in the gangland battle.


NORM



COMING SOON

Quake



Quake is definitely the game of the moment. It's coming up to almost a year since the first incarnation of the classic appeared on PC, and you just won't believe the incredible nature of the Sega Saturn conversion. They said it couldn't be done. RICH LEADBETTER now knows otherwise.

It's fair to say that last month was juuust a bit on the hectic side, mostly down to the inclusion of the Quake feature and its prominence on the front cover. Lobotomy Software released their first demo to Sega of America and it finally arrived at Sega Europe, where we got the first look at the amazing work that the talented team had produced. Unfortunately, we needed approval to print the myriad screenshots we had planned for you guys and it fell through, leaving us with only a couple to print.

Last issue we promised we'd do our best to publish them this month and this we duly deliver to you guys. It's fair to say that Quake generated a huge buzz when we first checked it out and although that anticipation was matched by our feature last issue, this month we finally show you all of the reasons as to why we think the Saturn version is so amazing!

Remember, Lobotomy Software have promised a landmark technical achievement for the Saturn! We shall see whether they deliver in the fullness of time, but now at least you can see why we're getting so excited about it.





Adding extra polygons to the engine in the form of weapons and power-ups could have caused problems. However, the pictures above and above-right show that Lobotomy have them in with no detriment to the game's speed! The polygon intensive weapons cause no problems at all, but obviously, the textures need to be added to the rocket launcher.



WHAT'S GOING ON

We managed to impart a fair bit of information about what Lobotomy have done so far in the last issue, and to be honest no new demo has emerged from their labs. What we do know is that the lead programmer Ezra Dreisbach is in the midst of adding special modifications to his SlaveDriver 3D rendering engine so as to keep up the speed, as well as introducing new lighting effects.

The real challenge for the team is incorporating the full 3D polygon monsters from the PC original into the Saturn version whilst keeping the speed up. Lobotomy have already included the polygonised pick-ups such as extra health and ammo, and even the weapons have been included (and these are far more polygon intensive) with no effect on the frame rate.

A SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE associate recently visited Lobotomy at their Seattle HQ and reported that the work on the monsters is proceeding at a great rate of knots. Demo monsters are in and are not slowing the game down at all!



Reaching the end of the first real level of Saturn Quake! The polygon count on the walls is high, but it's still smooth.

Bridge over troubled water... The water isn't transparent a la Exhumed, but those polygons shift about conveying a sense of movement. Excellent.





Another example of how different Quake looks on Saturn compared to PC. The left wall is lit in a much better way compared to the original - there's a Quad Damage power-up hidden behind it!

CH-CH-CHANGES

Lobotomy's primary aim with Quake is to bring the look, feel and the overall experience to the Saturn intact with very few compromises. As a hardened Quake player I have to admit that my experiences with Lobotomy's version have been very positive indeed. Their primary objectives appear to have been met - this IS Quake, but in many ways Saturn Quake is different.

I don't mean different in a negative type of way, by the way. Lobotomy have changed tiny aspects of the Quake geography in order to closer match the SlaveDriver's capabilities and this means slightly different maps. It's not so different that I didn't know where I was going and it certainly doesn't affect the overall superlative nature of the demo, it just means that some rooms have been altered in a tiny kind of way.

L-L-LIGHTING

Another area of change is in the lighting effects. Players of Exhumed will know that Lobotomy are the undisputed masters of light-sourcing, and the firm have used every trick at their disposal in order to make the Saturn version of Quake as spectacular as possible to look at.

Where do I begin? Perhaps with the lava effects. In the PC version, lava didn't really do much apart from chuck up the occasional piece of molten rock. In the Saturn version, lava casts an amazing red glow around the surrounding walls.

A similar effect is seen with the Slipgates - the portals between the "real world" and the world of the evil Quake. The screenshot in the last issue showed how Lobotomy have given these portals an awesome red glow - something not seen in the PC version.

With Lobotomy on the job Quake is guaranteed to become a classic game!

In PC Quake, underwater sections were produced by tinting the screen and wobbling the polygons about in a most convincing manner. Things have changed in the Saturn version. Shifting light-sources have been used to create a different, yet still remarkable effect. Mix up Quake, Tomb Raider and Exhumed and you should have some idea as to what these sections look like in our version.

In some areas the PC game does look cooler. For example, Lobotomy haven't yet got to grips with >>



Midway through the game an alarming number of the levels are situated in the sky... or on the way up to it.









Explosions in Saturn Quake may lack the particles of the PC version, but they are far, far more colourful (above). All of the secrets appear to be present and correct (left).





Apparently Lobotomy now have full 3D meanies! Expect creations exactly like the PC originals (which we have kindly pictured above).



The Slipgate to the first level looks even more spectacular than the PC version. We honestly can't wait for this game!



Lighting is often all-new in Saturn Quake. Each of the weapons casts a different glow on the surroundings... as you can see here with the nailgun!

Quake is one of the best games ever and that's a fact. Previously you would need a PC worth a grand to play it but no longer - Saturn Quake promises to be just as good - a quite unbelievable feat!

the ambient shadows that steep corners and what-have-you. However, some areas look much better thanks to the multicolour lighting that the SlaveDriver is capable of producing.

THINGS TO MAKE YOU GO BOOM!

Even at this early stage, Saturn Quake incorporates all of the weaponry from the PC version (bar the final weapon, the ThunderBolt which remains in production). Once again Lobotomy have lashed on the lighting effects left, right and centre. You get muzzle flashes from every weapon (even the lowly shotgun), but the real fireworks occur when you try out Quake's later weaponry, the grenade launcher and rocket launcher. At the moment, Lobotomy haven't tried to translate across the particle system Saturn Quake uses a different method to liven up its explosions. Instead exploding grenades produce a stunning light sourced effect (as readers of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE would have seen in the last issue). The rockets are even better - remember the way fireballs lit up the corridors in Saturn Exhumed? Well, the same is true of Saturn Quake's rockets, although the overall effect is more impressive!

WHAT'S BEEN DONE?

When Sega Europe first got hold of the Quake demo from which our pictures were taken, the code was already a month out of date and only represented what Lobotomy had achieved in a tiny four week schedule! FOUR WEEKS! It's pretty unbelievable stuff.

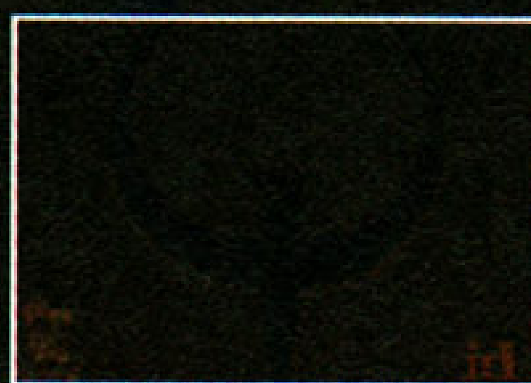
The version of the game we've seen runs at a frighteningly smooth frame rate already and the engine wasn't fully optimised at that time. That's right, this demo is simply an enhanced Exhumed with only a small amount of time having been put into the game mechanics by Ezra Dreisbach.

Ezra is continuing to optimise his engine in order to keep that smoothness with the inclusion of the 3D monsters at this time, while the rest of Lobotomy work on converting across the maps from the PC game and reworking them slightly for the Saturn game.

MAPS APLENTY

The SlaveDriver engine works by stripping down the information of the 3D virtual world down to an absolute minimum, displaying on-screen the bare minimum, thus keeping the speed up. Games like Doom and Hexen are actually display a fair amount of polygons that are actually obscured by others, rendering them invisible (so all the time calculating them was wasted). SlaveDriver manages things a lot more cleverly.

Actual PC data is used to create the texture-mapped walls in Saturn Quake, although the actual level data (easily obtained via level designing utilities freely available on the Internet) isn't really compatible with the BREW world design system Lobotomy



Even the classic id presentation of Quake has made it into the Saturn version (above) although now the Lobotomy logo stands proudly next to the id one!



This kind of subtle shadowing shows that Lobotomy are prepared to enhance the original version in truly original ways.



In the Entranceway section, we see the chamber underneath the well. Land on the wooden beams to find a secret difficulty level!



So the Saturn can't handle polygon 3D with super-dense lighting and shadows? Rubbish! This is the amount of detail on just the ceiling!

use to create their levels. That being the case, their designers are actually deconstructing each level by eye, with a PC on one side and their development kit on the other. It might be a hard and long process, but it yields the best results. The first level seen in the demo shows that this ends up with some small differences, but overall the effect is of an extremely similar look and feel - and that's what Lobotomy are after... and if it's a toss-up between absolute authenticity and playability, we know which one we'll go for every time. Playability of course!

Look forward to a gaming classic...

MULTI-PLAYER?

Quake is the undisputed king of multiplayer games. In fact, it is for this game mode that many people believe it to be the greatest videogame ever created in the world. Ever. There's currently bad news in this regard - due to the severe strains the new system Lobotomy have created has put upon the Saturn, it's unlikely that the game will have any DeathMatch action via either the link cable or the NetLink. Lobotomy haven't totally ruled it out at this stage, but it's not on the top of their packed agenda at this time. If anything changes we'll let you know...

NINE INCH NAILS!

Nine Inch Nails have a great deal to do with the Quake project. Not only are they the ammunition of choice for the perforator and nail gun weapons, but also the rock-techno band who have produced the soundtrack for Quake. NIN's Trent Reznor is an absolutely huge id software fan, having become a serious Doom addict a couple of years back. He contributed a range of sound effects along with a seriously awesome soundtrack (it's not exactly what you'd call music) and what's more he did all of this FREE OF CHARGE! All the sound should be in the Saturn game.

THERE'S STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

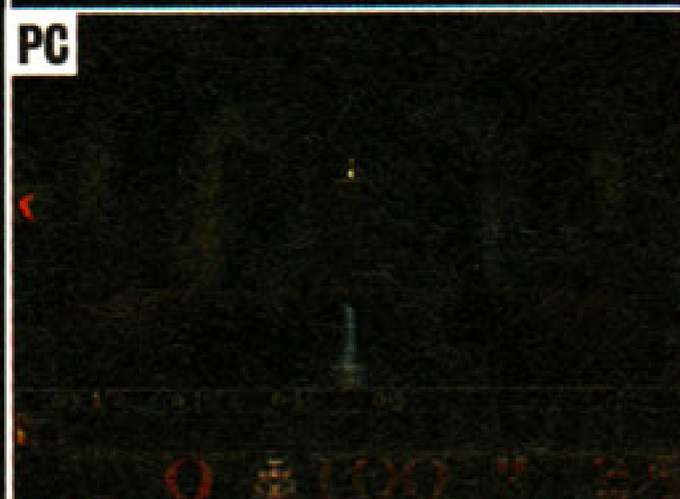
Producing Quake for the Saturn was never going to be easy. Lobotomy are actually the second developer to attempt a conversion, the first effort judged "not good enough" by quality-conscious Sega who clearly don't want a poor conversion of this most coveted of games. However, whereas the original developer aimed to port the id engine across lock, stock and barrel, Lobotomy are trying a different approach, mimicking PC Quake by using their own SlaveDriver technology.

This approach is clearly paying off, with even 3D programming master god programmer John Carmack (the guy who designed Quake and Doom for chrissake!) being impressed with the work. Carmack doesn't think that his game can work for the Saturn's RISC processors ("it's not a very good architectural match" he told SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE), since his code was developed for Pentium level PCs, so essentially Lobotomy's approach is the only one that can produce a good version.

Lobotomy themselves are supremely confident of producing a ground-breaking Saturn game and with their reputation at stake, we know that they're aiming to produce a truly monumental videogame! Stay with SSM - we're aiming to follow this game all the way through to its completion.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

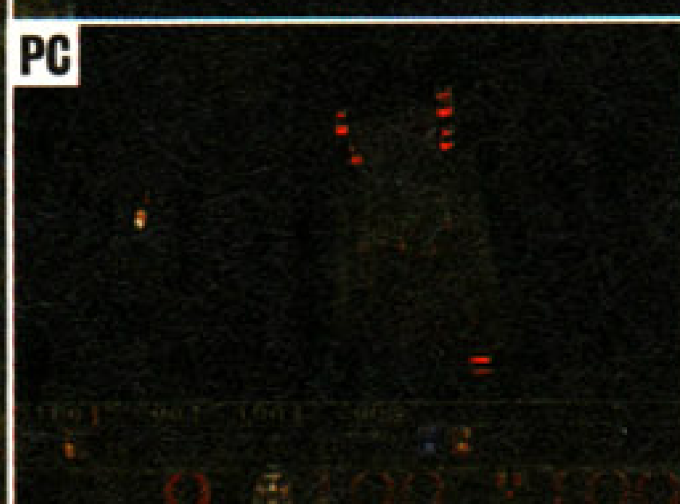
Quake on the Saturn must be one of the most highly anticipated videogames of the year. Everyone knows what the PC version is like so the best way of showing how cool the Saturn one is involves comparing and contrasting... just like we did last month only now with more pictures. Wahoo!



The PC Episode Selection area has many differing textures...



All the Saturn version lacks is a solitary torch! Brilliant.



The Episode Two Slipgate is a polygon-intensive area...



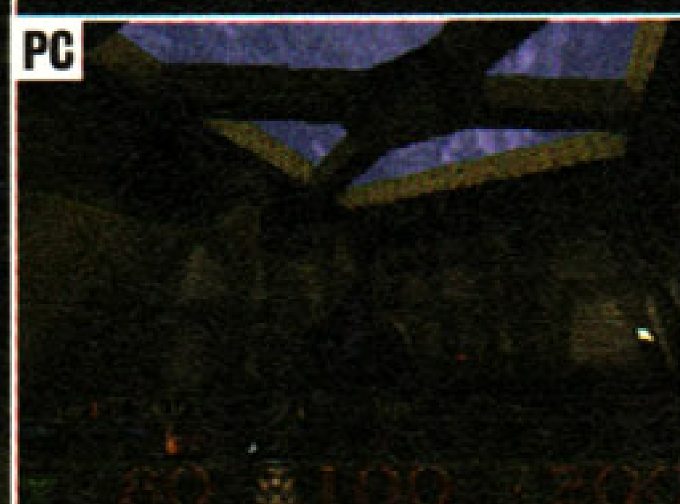
... But the Saturn handles it identically with no problems.



Firing off a rocket at the beginning of the first level...



Dynamic lighting is far more colourful on the Saturn game!



Into the first level proper as the player looks to the skies.



You can see small changes in geography and lighting.



Coming up on the last corner of the first level on PC here.



And despite being a tad lighter, Saturn Quake is very close.

JUST REMEMBER...

Take a look at these Quake pics... Great eh? There is absolutely no doubt that this is one of the most fancied videogames on any console platform!

The PC version only happens to be the best game on the system and is consistently feted by all who play it as an absolutely unmissable experience... and soon we shall have a very similar experience on the Sega Saturn. Just look at those screenshots and *feel* the quality of this megagame! Already the Saturn version looks sensational. The thing SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE asks you to remember above all else is that all of our pictures hail from a single demo Lobotomy have produced... a piece of code soooo early in development that it only represents a very small portion of what the company aim to achieve with the final product. There are well over 30 different stages on the PC version, split into four different episodes. These episodes have a very different graphical style and pose a different challenge... not only playing them but converting them across from PC to Saturn too! So yes, swoon all you want over these amazing pictures, but remember: the best is yet to be! We've only shown a couple of the levels that Lobotomy have converted and they're not exactly the best in the game. What you have seen here is breathtaking. What you will be playing come October will blow even this away.

With Lobotomy at the helm Quake Saturn should surpass all of our expectations! Mark our words, the best team are on the job.

METAL SLUG

SNK... They do fighting games, right? Wrong. The company started a strategy of diversification about a year ago, resulting in some brilliant blasting games such as Pulstar and... Metal Slug - the latter of which has now appeared on Saturn. RICH LEADBETTER marvels at it.



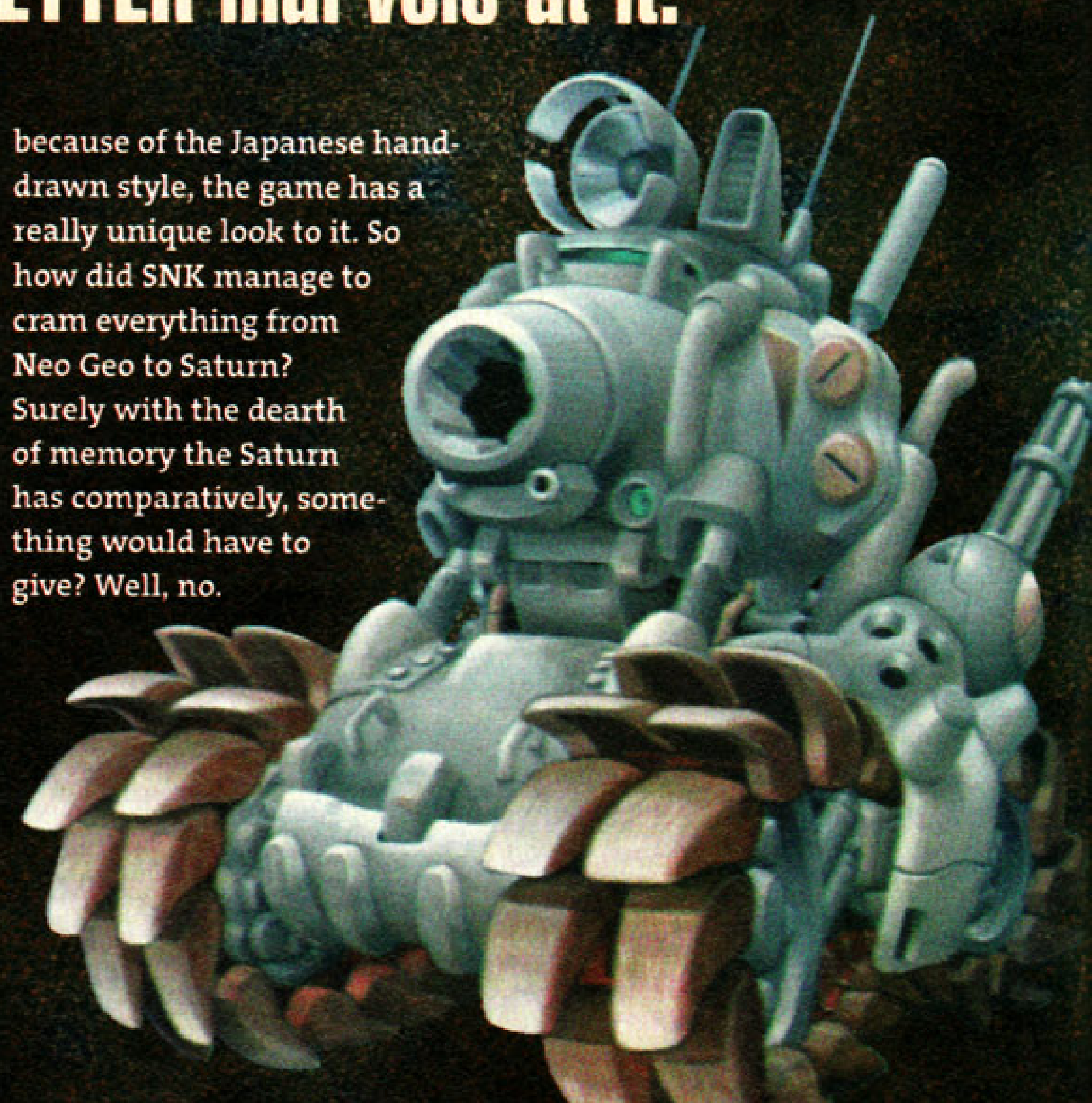
Tanks collapse on top of you... unless you're careful!

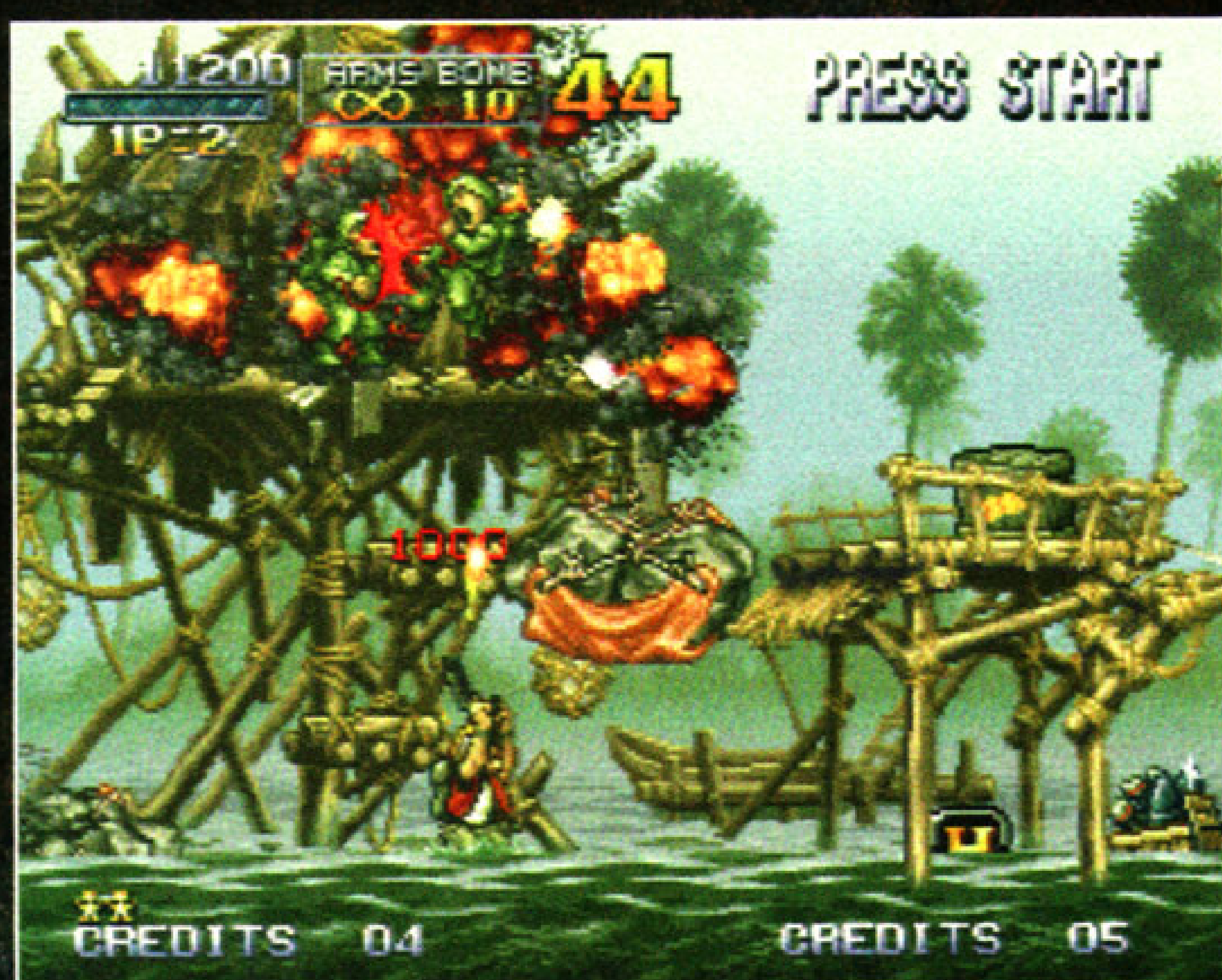
I love Metal Slug. I really do. That's the reason behind the somewhat extended coverage we've given the game - there's just nothing like it on the Saturn. There's only one problem. At the time of writing, no-one has picked up the game for release in any country outside of Japan - a great, great shame because this title is superb fun. Pure and simple fun.

Being an SNK title, it originally hails from the arcade Neo Geo board where the programmers had absolutely huge stacks of memory to fill. This they did with some of the most intricate, detail-packed levels you've ever seen. The sheer amount of detail is just amazing - there's always something "going on" on-screen and because of the Japanese hand-drawn style, the game has a really unique look to it. So how did SNK manage to cram everything from Neo Geo to Saturn? Surely with the dearth of memory the Saturn has comparatively, something would have to give? Well, no.















Two shots (above) show the player-controlled Metal Slug in full devastating form!

Combining Contra's playability with hugely amusing graphics Metal Slug is one of SNK's best titles - and for once it's not a beat 'em up!

CART BLANCHE

The way that SNK managed to convert across Metal Slug is probably the reason why it's only available in Japan at the moment. It makes use of the Saturn's cartridge port, with a supplied RAM cart providing extra memory in addition to the Saturn's two-and-a-half megabytes of internal RAM. The cart bolts on an extra megabyte to the standard Saturn, and with the aid of some nifty compression and some inter-level loading, the machine faithfully replicates the arcade game pixel for pixel.

Some might say that this memory card is swiftly going to become a standard. Over the last few months we've seen four quality titles make use of it. Metal Slug's one, Real Bout Fatal Fury is another and King of Fighters '96 also uses it (see Big In Japan last month).

If you think this cart is an SNK only phenomena, you're wrong. Capcom have also decided to support it and Cyberbots is their first title to support it (see page 56). The difference with Capcom's support is that the game works without it too - although you miss out on arcade-perfect graphics (frames of animation are lacking). Chances are that the forthcoming X-Men Versus Street Fighter and Marvel Super Heroes will make use of it too to boost graphical qualities... don't you wish you had one now?

Sooner or later, this cart is bound to appear over here and when it does, hopefully Metal Slug will finally reach a deserving European audience!

CONTRA 2

Metal Slug is like a very mad version of Konami's Contra (or Probotector) series of games. It's a 2D side-on scrolling shoot 'em up, casting one or two players as diehard mercenary types up against hordes of troops and enormous bosses. As you might imagine, there is plenty of power-up weaponry to collect into the bargain, as well as the occasional vehicle to jump into (the eponymous Metal Slug, no less). Sounds simple eh? Well, it is. Extremely simple. However, Metal Slug is programmed with the conviction of a master team of coders who know what games are supposed to be about: fun.

To be frank, there aren't that many levels. If you want to, you can simply keep on using the game's level select and credits system to play it through in a couple of sessions, but you're really missing the point here. Metal Slug is one of those games that you want to keep on playing even when it's complete, >>







The bosses in Metal Slug are absolutely ace, brilliantly designed 2D creations (left).



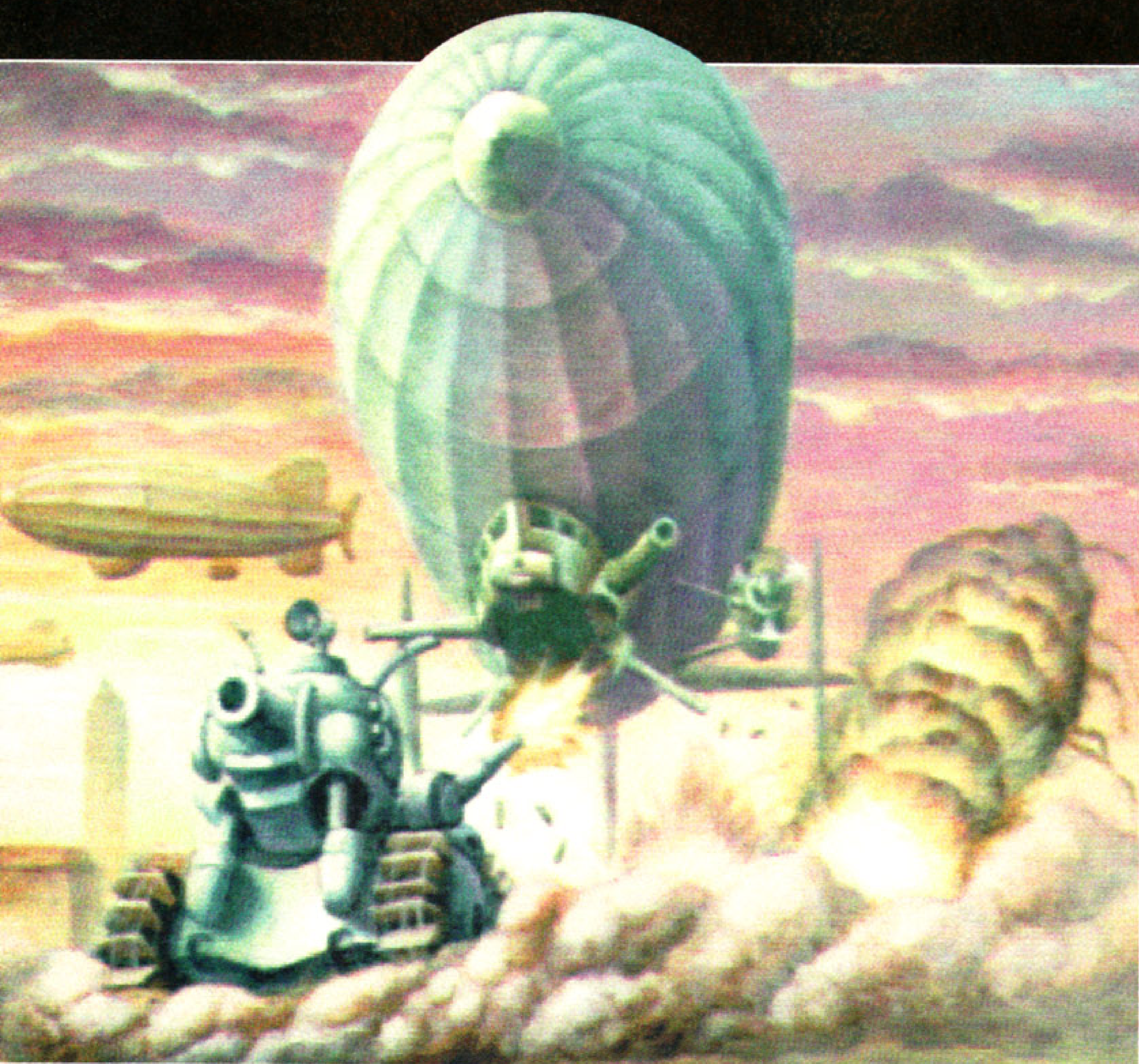
As befitting these types of games, the explosions are suitably spectacular.





The boss action continues as it unleashes an enormous laser beam! Grab that rocket launcher! In the picture above right, we see the heavy machine gun making the final blow.





The barges pass by beneath. Jump up, point down, and get blasting! Watch the damage stack up on the water-faring vessels. But be warned! Once a ship begins to sink, you better get your ass outta there.







Those who yearn for days of yore will absolutely love SNK's Metal Slug - ye olde blasting action combines with some stunning visuals!





The screen is alive with sprites at all times during the game. Metal Slug is just soooo cool!

simply because its so much fun. It's a visual orgy of explosions, destruction and humour.

SNK's sub-division have crammed in as many laughs as possible. For example, on one section of the game, there's a section where you rain bullets down on various ocean-faring vessels, populated by enemy soldiers. When you get down to the last soldier, he frantically tries to save his ship by pumping out the water from his blasted vessel. Of course it's a wasted effort!

In these days of progressively advanced 3D graphics, Metal Slug is breath of fresh air - as I said earlier, there's nothing like this on the Saturn and I think it's brilliant. A triumph of design over technology (although with the amount of sprites on-screen here, it's not doing too badly in the latter category either).

HOSTAGES 'R' US

It's a funny thing, the whole rescue-the-hostage situation found in Metal Slug. The enemy have captured the good guys and have them imprisoned around the level (they're usually tied to a chair, just tied up or indeed strung up overhead!). The first thing to do is shoot them. Yes! Gun them down! Rather than murdering them on the spot, this actually sets them free from their bonds (obviously the Metal Slug guys are very good shots). Now you're free to run up to them and touch them. Rather than resulting in you getting a smack around the face this actually causes the hostage in question to unravel some enormous great blueprint which swiftly disappears in favour of a lovely power-up.

EXPLOSIVE SET-PIECES

A great deal of memory has been set aside to show off the imaginations of the Metal Slug designers. The backgrounds are literally alive with brilliant graphical touches. For a start, a great deal of the level is destructible. Simply shoot long enough at certain sections and they quickly crumble or explode. It's not just you who does this either - the enemy fire helps bring about the destruction and the boss creatures are known to blast their way through tons of ground to get to you!

Also worth looking out for are the myriad boxes, barrels and what-have-you dotted around the levels. They don't particularly do much... until you repeatedly shoot them.



This tank's shields wilt under rocket launcher power!





Mid-level monstrosities warm you up for the horrifying bosses!





The intricacy of the graphics increases with every level!





The short-range weapon of choice, this super-shotgun annihilates tanks with just a couple of shots!



Throughout the game Metal Slug is packed with brilliant detail even down to an amusing section where a pig takes a dump in a house...

Expect a huge amount of destruction to follow, with platforms and walls being blown all over the place. In fact, entire buildings are known to collapse in Metal Slug.

Another level has tanks up on a hill. Rather than take out the artillery, why not concentrate on the hill? Watch that hardware come on down!

EXTRA! EXTRA!

There's an old videogames adage which goes something along the lines of: "Arcade games might be brilliant, but they're not always ideal for the home". The programmers of Metal Slug obviously agree because the home versions of the game (a version is also available on Neo Geo CD) feature an additional Combat School Mode, which allows you to register yourself as a recruit. Once this is done, you take on the levels of the game in a kind of Time Attack style, aiming to get the best times on each individual level. This part of the game is presided over by Manga babe Sophia, who takes you through each step. We get the idea that once you've done pretty well on the Time Attack style, some other bits and bobs might open up, boosting lastability still further, but to be honest we can't be sure until we've worked our way through it. Multiple files can exist, allowing a number of different recruits to compete in the search of Metal Slug mastery!

Either way, it's a great way of boosting the value you get from this. What with it only being available on import at the moment, you really need stuff like this to maximise your enjoyment.

A BIT OF ADVICE!

Here's some advice for those powers that be up there somewhere. Part of the Saturn's appeal is its ability to produce games like this... and games like this aren't possible without the extra memory cartridge! SSM reckons that the cartridge in question is soon to become essential kit for the Saturn... after all if third parties such as SNK and Capcom are making full use of it why shouldn't the other firms... and indeed Sega itself! Get the cart and games like Metal Slug on the shelves NOW!

ENTER... THE METAL SLUG

Metal Slug is a really weird name for a game, but then it is Japanese. Still, if you're interested, the name derives from the armoured form of transport you find dotted around the level. A big "IN" sign invites you to enter the aforementioned vehicle and once inside you instantly benefit from layers of armour protection along with a cannon that fires in all 360 degrees! You can still jump too, making the machine manoeuvrable as well as powerful. Let the carnage ascend to new levels of destruction!





The enemy tank toasts our pour hero into smouldering ashes.

AIM! FIRE!

Metal Slug has weapons coming out of its metaphorical ears. All of them are capable of rampant destruction, with the exception of the crappy pea-shooter pistol you start off with.

PISTOL

Low-power and very crap, this is the weapon you start off with. Get rid of it as quickly as you can and move on to something with more pain-inducing capabilities.

MACHINE GUN

This is more like it! Firing medium power bullets at a frightening speed, the machine gun is well worth equipping yourself with. It's a brilliant, long-lasting tool of death!

FLAMETHROWER

This is pretty slow to use, but it has a couple of redeeming features. First of all, one blast takes out more than one guy. Secondly, the toasted corpse effect is hilarious.

SHOTGUN

This is actually a short-range weapon of incredible power, literally erecting a wall of explosive power in front of you. This weapon molests like no other!

ROCKET LAUNCHER

The rockets are slow to pick up speed, but once they get going, they give you the benefit of awesome power and a decent fire-rate. Excellent boss destruction!

BOMBS

You start out with ten of these and can pick up more during your adventures. Just lob them about and watch the explosive consequences. Again, great for bosses.



COMING SOON

Actua Soccer Club Edition

The reality for millions of aspiring footballers across the country is that the only glimpse of football fame you're ever likely to experience is playing for your local pub team on a Sunday afternoon. Until now that is. The arrival of Actua Soccer Club Edition means that now you can knock about a ball with the likes of Shearer and re-live those boyhood dreams. LEE NUTTER reports.

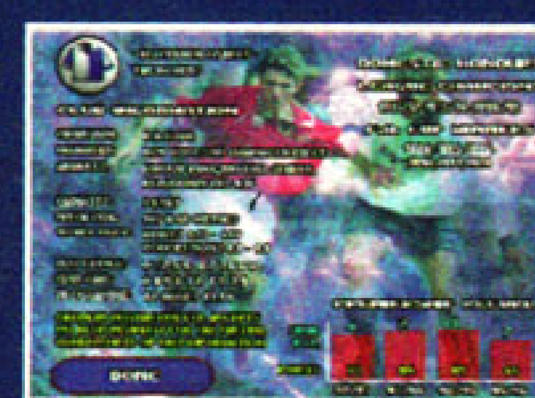
I'm not quite sure that these sport sim updates that software companies see fit to roll out every year are a good idea. It's very rare that they improve upon the original formula sufficiently to justify shelling out another forty-something quid on it. Don't get me wrong, I'm as impressed as anyone by fancy camera angles, the latest team listings, different stadiums and so forth. But if the game is essentially the same as the prequel, your money is better spent elsewhere. Gripe aside, I'm hoping Actua Soccer Club Edition proves to be the exception to the rule. As the sequel to last year's hit Euro '96, it appears adequately packed with brand spanking new features to justify some serious consideration. However, with the absence of the euphoria that surrounded the first game with no big tournament being staged in this country, whether ASCE can >>



The players face off in a huge pre-match sumo wrestling competition.



Surely the cries of "Dive! Dive!" should be reserved for submarine captains.





Choose to play as any of the twenty official Premiership teams in this new rendition of the old Euro '96.

repeat the success of Euro '96 is yet to be seen. Rest assured we'll have all the answers in a forthcoming issue of Sega Saturn Magazine. Bet you can't wait, eh?

IT'S OFFICIAL!

It really is quite disturbing the amount of letters and phone calls we've had from anal football fanatics complaining about the absence of Premier League sides in the awesome Worldwide Soccer '97. Frankly if the game plays well who gives a toss what the teams are called? Well obviously Gremlin do, which is why Actua Soccer Club Edition is bound to have a lot of appeal for many people. Being the club edition, all the European teams of the prequel are removed to make room for all the current Premiere League teams. There's around twenty of them in total, each with the current player listings allowing you to create your ultimate dream team. This gives the game an added air of authenticity which some might say was lacking from Sega's footy title, even if all the players are identical clones of one another. In fact, it is apparent that getting the game as close to the real thing was a high priority for the programmers, which is no doubt why Gremlin have brought back the commentating expertise of Match of the Day's Barry Davies. Despite not being quite as vocal as we would like, the commentary that beleaguers so many sports sims is actually very good. The use of repetitive phrases is kept to a minimum and the commentary has been done in such a way as to keep it quite specific to what's going on. So for example instead of saying "what's his name passes the ball to his teammate", the commentary more specifically says "Shearer passes to Ferdinand". Cool!

ALL-NEW FEATURES TO BOOT!

What makes or breaks a footy title these days is the range of options that have been crammed into it and in this area at least, Actua doesn't disappoint. For starters, there are the three distinct modes of play. The practice mode gives you the opportunity to practice various manoeuvres with your fellow teammates alone on a pitch. Whereas the friendly mode is merely a one-off match allowing you to test your new found skills against a proper opponent. The more challenging season however, requires you to guide your team through innumerable matches to win the Premier League Championship. A gruelling task not to be undertaken lightly, especially if you decide to play the full 90 minutes of each match.

Then there's a comprehensive list of options relating to the games themselves, allowing you to tinker with the game mechanics to suit your particular needs. So for example, if you're of the philosophical position that the off-side rule only serves to inhibit the players thus spoiling the excitement of the game, then turn it off. Likewise free kicks can be turned on and off at your discretion, as can player bookings allowing you to get away with the most blatant Vinnie Jones style fouls. Gremlin have



Yet another option screen to wade through before you finally get down to a bit of footy action.



A nice shot off the back of the 'keepers head. Erm... and so forth, etc.









A fumble by the 'keeper gives Newcastle a scoring chance.



New front-end screens and player listings are just about all that's new. Although the players act like their real-life counterparts.



COMING SOON





The goal line camera gives you a good view of the action at the goal mouth, but isn't much help when the play is in mid-field. D'oh! And double d'oh!





With all the official teams and players from the Premiership league, Actua Soccer Club Edition should keep football fanatics happy.

even thought of giving you the God-like ability to control the speed of the wind, changing the velocity and curvature of the ball immensely. You can even choose the blinkin' ref, each of which are graded in terms of their vision and discipline. In fact, just about the only thing you can't do in Actua is bung the keeper a wad of cash to let the ball in the net. Er... not that I'm advocating that such a thing has ever happened in the real Premiership.

CONTROL FREAKS!

To help give the controls a more intuitive feel to them than most other football sims, Actua Soccer Club Edition features no less than four different pad set-ups for you to choose from. Once you've found the one that suits your style best which invariably is the default setting, mastery is only a matter of time. As a result you'll be pulling off all sorts of volleys, chips, back heeling, chesting, flicks and maybe even stamping on opponents. Who knows where it will all end?

Now you may well be wondering how you are supposed to tell what's happening on the rest of the field, as Actua doesn't feature the radar-like gadget of WWS. Well Gremlin have overcome this problem by using the markers at the players' feet which indicate possession of the ball to assist your game in a similar way. For example, if the marker is a flashing triangle then this means that you're within shooting range of the opposition's goal. However, if the marker changes to a square, this is to indicate that there are players in the box waiting to receive your cross and so forth. This system allows for some speedy decision making without having to scan around the field to see if your player has support.

With the ball at his feet a goal is merely a formality for the Tottenham boys, though the Liverpool defence may have something to say about that.

MORE THAN JUST A GAME?

As any football fan will know, there's more to football than a bunch of men running about a field chasing an inflated spherical object. It's about strategy, or so they tell me. That's why Gremlin have included a number of customisable options to allow you to work on the best strategy for your chosen team. Taking a kind of player/manager role in the proceedings, you are able to select which players you want and how you're going to play them. Each of the players have been graded on several criteria such as stamina and power, allowing you to choose who you want on your team for each match. So for example, if you still feel resentment towards Villa's Gareth Southgate for blowing the biggest opportunity in English football history, keep him on the bench. When it comes to strategy, it's up to you to decide whether you want a good defence, a strong mid-field or to push more players forward to keep the goals coming. You could choose to play a 4-2-4 strategy (whatever that means) or a 5-2-3 strategy. Far from being just a gimmick to create the illusion that the game is more in depth than it actually is, the element of strategy in ASCE has a strong bearing on how the game plays. Review next issue.









This sequence of shots shows off the variety in the range of camera angles that Gremlin have included in Actua Soccer Club Edition. Oh yes, and an own goal by Dean Saunders. Naughty boy.



After their disastrous defeat at the hands of Leicester in the Coca-Cola Cup Final, the Middlesbrough lads struggle to break even against the lowly Leeds United posse. Bryan Robson will be having words methinks.

ONE OTHER THING WE WANT TO MAKE PERFECTLY CLEAR BESIDES YOUR FACE



When looking for Biactol, now look for Biactol from Clearasil.

PREVIEW

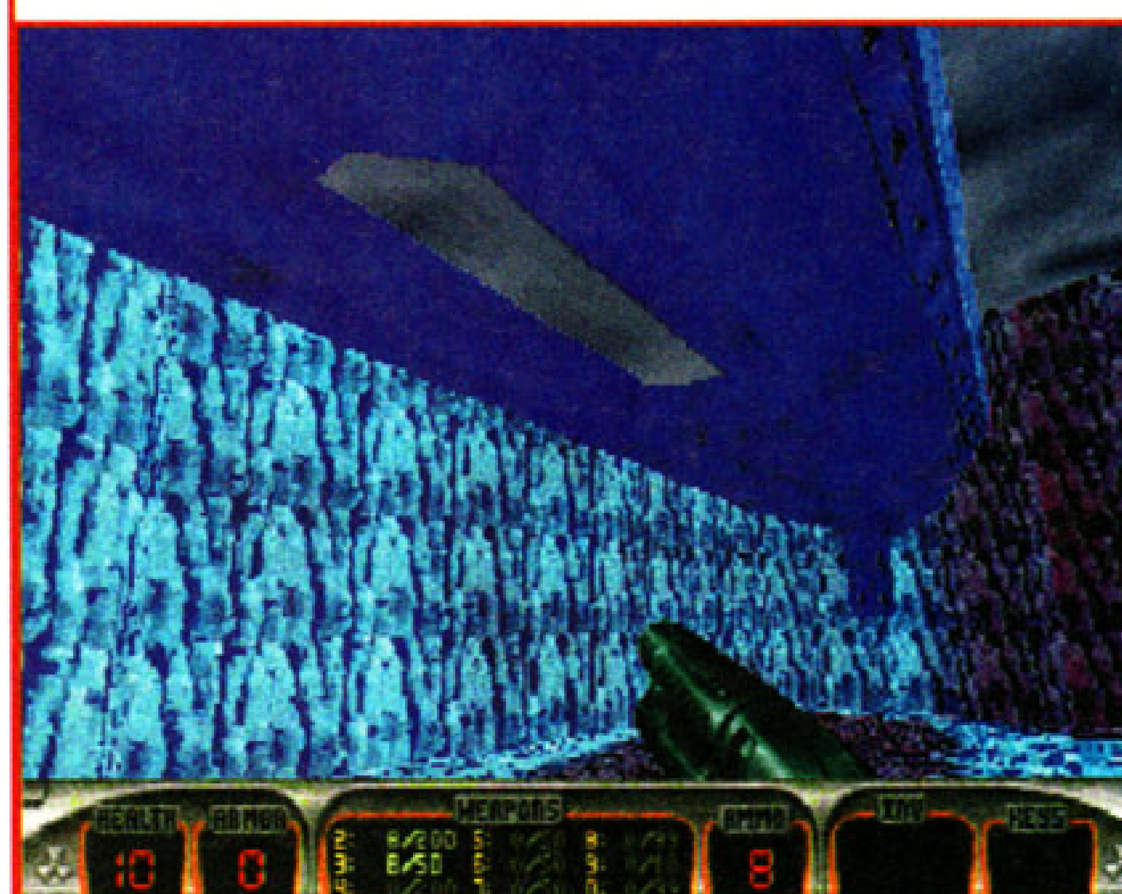
DUKE NUKEM 3D

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has been at the forefront of Lobotomy Software's endeavours to bring two of the best PC games ever across to the Saturn. The Duke update continues this month with these incredible pictures!

BY	SEGA/LABOTOMY
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE	SEPTEMBER

SUBMARINE ACTION!

The submarine stage is the most easily recognisable level of the first episode and also one of the most difficult to convert from PC to Saturn. The reason is that the submarine resides in an enormously open canyon. It's areas like this that Lobotomy have had to recode their engine to cope with. The engine does it without any kind of clipping or misting effects (as seen in preproduction N64 Duke!) and looks absolutely brilliant. It's this kind of stuff that makes the Saturn version of Duke so technically ground-breaking!









Saturn Duke Nukem is going to be epoch-making! Trust us...



The path towards the completed Saturn version of Duke Nukem 3D is now reaching its conclusion. Lobotomy Software have finished the tweaks to their incredible graphics engine and are now in the process of converting across the maps from PC to Saturn.

As you can see from our screenshots (which for the first time ever show levels other than the first one!), Lobotomy's conversion is looking seriously, seriously cool. Some might say that with the superior lighting effects it actually looks better than the PC original! The company promised as much in their interview with SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE in issue #18 and now we have the evidence on this page to show that they have lived up to their word. Bottom line: Duke Nukem 3D looks amazing!

Despite less than ten weeks of hard coding, Lobotomy are already well on the road to completion and Duke Nukem 3D is slated as one of the highpoints of the forthcoming E3 in Atlanta in June, where an as-near-as-dammit finished version will be the centrepoint of Sega's immense stand. Sega of America seek to affirm the Saturn's status as a PlayStation-beating alternative to other next generation machines and with games like this on display, it's going to be a great show for them (particularly as Saturn Duke looks better than the N64 version - and that's no lie!).

Quake too should help Sega's cause no end and it's clear that SoA have a great deal to thank Lobotomy for!

Still, back to Duke Nukem. Lobotomy's ace programmer Ezra Dreisbach has completed his enhancements to the Exhumed engine, and Duke

Saturn Duke just gets better and better - marvel at these awesome graphics! Lobotomy are on course to produce a spectacular rendition of the PC classic!



The exploding entrails are all in and looking very good indeed. Blast them all! Ahahahaha!



The final lighting effects are in on the first level, and as you can see, it's looking excellent.





In the little cubicle in the "adult" cinema, a pig sergeant gets blasted at close range!







Now tell us that this level isn't looking SPECTACULAR!







The freeze ray has its own lighting not seen in the PC version.

No matter how complex the original Saturn Duke replicates it! Huge open areas are no problem for Lobotomy's enhanced engine!

remains just as smooth as Exhumed was - despite the huge open spaces and the enormous great walls. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE can guarantee that this is going to be a really ground-breaking game... it's going to be amazing!

Lobotomy are currently on the last straight with regards to this conversion. They've got the engine to go as fast as it's going to and the Duke Nukem game logic is all present and correct. There's perhaps still a little too much inertia on the character (more Exhumed in control as opposed to the sharp play of PC Duke) but this is a tiny problem to overcome.



Of course, the big news is that just about all of the first episode of levels is nigh-on complete... as you can see from the screenshots. From the city streets of Los Angeles into the desert and the brilliant submarine level, it's all there to see right here in front of you.

The lighting effects (the last pieces of the map to be included, bar the destructible scenery) also look absolutely spectacular. This part of the game in particular is what differentiates it from the PC original, with each weapon causing different effects on the scenery, along with light-sources (such as overhead strip lights and what-have-you) doing their thing. The overall look is excellent and when you see just how fast this all moves, you'll be stunned. The Saturn has never done anything like this before (well actually Exhumed got close, but the levels were far simpler) and it's a great taster for the machine's unrivalled 3D power!

We're going to be taking a bit of a rest from the Duke Nukem coverage over the next couple of months, letting Lobotomy get on with completing the game... and then we'll be back with a vengeance! Rest assured, you've hardly seen anything yet. This game will rule!



The racks of pornography are all present and correct...

CENSORED? NO!

With Sega of America in charge of this project you might think that Duke Nukem 3D will be censored in some way (especially after the censorship issues in the US (not UK) version of Fighters MegaMix, for example). But no! Lobotomy have been given the license to make this game just as offensive as it was on PC, so rest assured, Sega will not be toning down this risque title!



In the final version, there should be some animation here.

JONAH LOMU RUGBY

Imagine the scene if you will: A rain-soaked pitch plays host to two teams of talented sportsmen. With time running out and only one point separating the victors from the losers, weary mud-splattered players frantically scrabble for possession of that all but elusive ball.

BY	CODEMASTERS
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SPORTS
RELEASE	MAY

VITAL STATISTICS

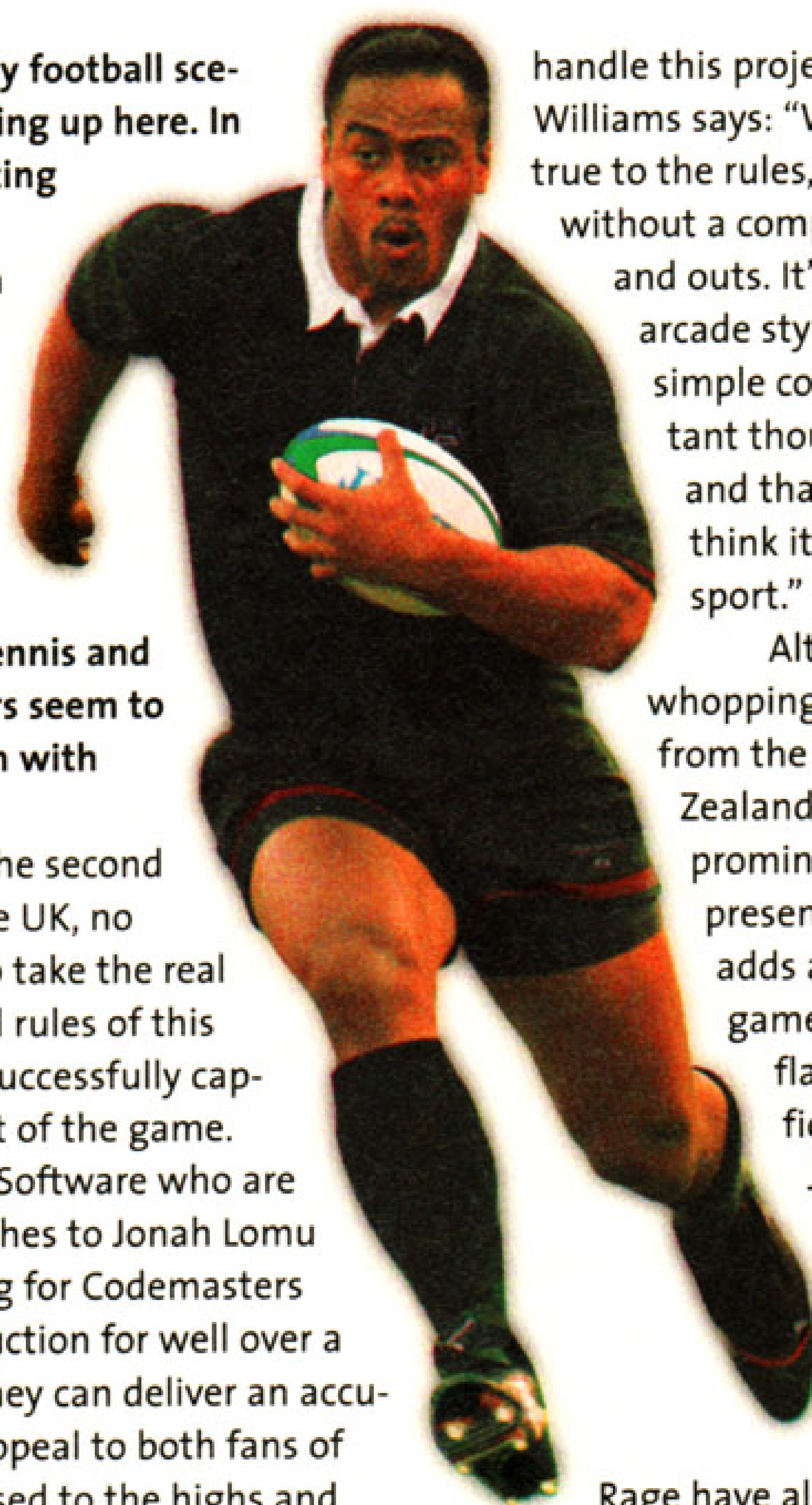
Born: Aukland, New Zealand 1975
Plays: Wing
Height: 6'4"
Weight: 19 stone
Speed: 10.8 seconds over 100 metres

As the star player of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, Jonah Lomu's rise to stardom has been nothing short of miraculous. Tongan by nationality, Jonah was born and raised down under in Aukland New Zealand where his formative sporting years saw him winning numerous sprint running trophies - a talent that has propelled him to the forefront of rugby. At the age of 23 he has played 24 matches for the All Blacks and scored 17 tries. Jonah Lomu was also the youngest rugby international to play for the All Blacks when New Zealand faced France in 1994, at the age of just 19!



Yet this is no fantasy football scenario we're conjuring up here. In fact the scene-setting intro you've just read should give you some idea of the intensity and accuracy contained within Codemasters' forthcoming multi-player release, Jonah Lomu Rugby. While certainly no stranger to licensed sports titles - witness Pete Sampras Tennis and Brian Lara Cricket - Codemasters seem to have taken a slight leap of faith with their first 32-bit sports sim.

Although rugby may be the second most popular team game in the UK, no developer has yet attempted to take the real life mechanics and complicated rules of this sport and produce a title that successfully captures the mood and excitement of the game. Enter Birmingham based Rage Software who are busy putting the finishing touches to Jonah Lomu Rugby, a title they're developing for Codemasters and one that has been in production for well over a year. Rage are confident that they can deliver an accurate, playable game that will appeal to both fans of the sport and Saturn owners used to the highs and lows of recent footie titles. With a number of soccer games under their belt, including Striker and FIFA '97 conversions for EA, Rage are definitely the team to handle this project. As Rage's head honcho Trevor Williams says: "We wanted a game that stayed true to the rules, but was easy to pick up and play without a complete understanding of all the ins and outs. It's definitely turned out as an arcade style game - lots of movement and simple controls. We also thought it important though, that all the rules are in there, and that people who know the game will think it's an accurate simulation of the sport."



Although the game features a whopping 32 international teams, ranging from the masters of the sport, New Zealand, Australia and England, to less prominent squads, such as the USA, the presence of man-mountain Jonah Lomu adds a vital seal of approval to the game. As the world's most powerful flanker, and reputedly the most difficult player in the league to tackle, Jonah's presence shows the commitment that both Rage and Codemasters have to producing the highest quality rugby title. Obviously keen to keep the game as accurate as possible, Rage have also employed the vocal talents of renowned sports commentators, Bill McClaren and Bill Beaumont. Further adding to the game's sense of realism are dynamic weather conditions providing players

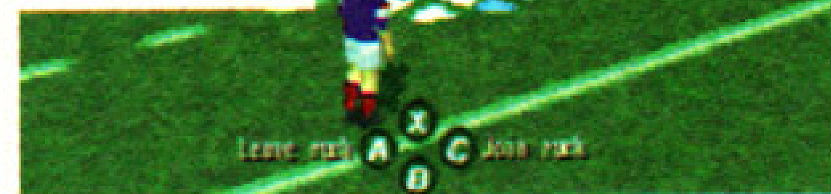
"We wanted a game that stayed true to the rules, but was easy to pick up and play without a complete understanding of all the ins and outs." - Trevor Williams











When in the scrum, rapidly hit the C button.



After a sweaty scrum, one player will usually emerge victorious, with the ball safely in his possession. Now head for the goal line you fool!



Jonah's handy on-screen control prompts negate the need for lengthy manuals.






After a winning try, players line up for a goal kick. Use the arrow to judge the distance and then put the boot in!


Holding down the X button provides a momentary burst of speed allowing players to nip past the opposition's defences.

As the world's most powerful flanker Jonah's presence shows the commitment that both Rage and Codies have to producing the highest quality rugby title.

with mud-soaked pitches, rain effects and even flood-lit night matches. In keeping with the slick Sky Sports style coverage afforded many console football titles, Jonah Lomu Rugby also features a handy replay option enabling fast forwarding and rewinding of match footage complete with scratchy video tape interference.



The game itself offers a number of play modes allowing sports nuts to wade through Friendly, Tournament, World Cup, Territories Cup - including Five Nations - and all-time Classic Matches. However, the complex rules and speed of the game have proven challenging for Rage as programmers Tony McCabe and Antonio Argentieri explain: "In football you only need one player model, but in rugby there are all the different set-pieces: scrums, mauls, passing plays. You have to have a control model and intelligence model for each." The set-up of a rugby team is also more complex for the programmers: "A rugby team has specialisation. You won't get wingers moving into the scrum unless they really have to, so we've programmed them to avoid getting into situations which don't suit their style of play. The game engine is just about there, a lot of the time we have left will be spent working on the player intelligence."

With 33 animated characters on screen at once, four detailed stadiums to play in and the game's stop-start nature, it's obvious that Rage have taken on a real challenge. Fortunately the results so far have been extremely promising with the PlayStation version receiving glowing praise from the specialist press. Hopefully, Rage will be able to tweak and tighten the Saturn version of the game and produce one of the premier sports titles of '97.

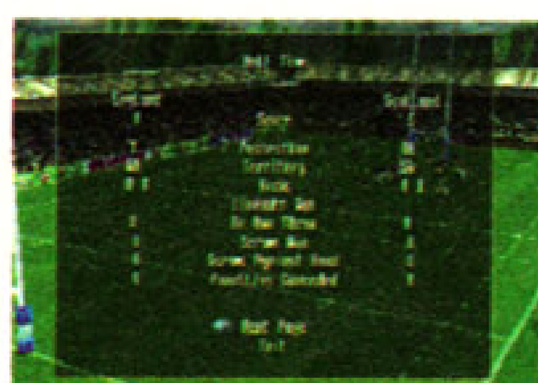

Hey, it's the big man himself! Jonah Lomu's presence in the game gives New Zealand a definite edge over other teams.

WEATHER WITH YOU

Jonah Lomu Rugby offers some of the most realistic playing conditions ever seen in a sports game courtesy of its Dynamic Climate feature. There are four All Weather Stadiums to choose from - Tallyfield, Hagley Road, Aston Road and Ballydown Park. By adding such effects as intermittent rain showers, snow, wind, lightning and dramatic lighting effects, Rage hope to cater for every possible match set-up. If this attention to detail isn't impressive enough, you'll undoubtedly be pleased to learn that mud thrown up by scrums and tackles even soils players' shirts. You dirty buggers!

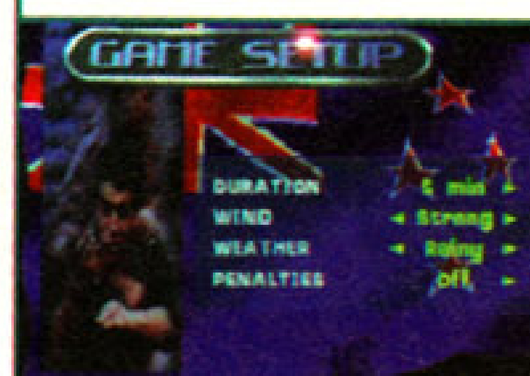


Players may join scrums or simply wait for the ball to be passed to them.






Select from three varied camera angles.





SKYTARGET

So you want to know what the next big arcade conversion to the Saturn is going to be, eh? Last Bronx maybe? Touring Car perchance? None of the above. Try SkyTarget, a good old fashioned shoot 'em up if ever there was one.

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE	JULY



Explosions abound as the enemy fighter planes are blasted out of the sky courtesy of your supply of homing missiles.

CHOCS AWAY!

Using the wonders of 3D, SkyTarget manages to incorporate two different perspectives on the action, activated though cunning use of the Z button. Both of the views on offer are chase-style perspectives, one quite close to the tail of your 'plane and the other further off, giving a more panoramic view of the surroundings. When it actually comes to playing the game though, the standard tail view is the better of the two.



The default chase perspective is the best of the two.



The second view has the camera positioned further back.

A few months ago you may recall we pre-viewed a very early Saturn conversion of Sega's Model 2 coin-op SkyTarget. Following in the footsteps of the recent Manx TT, the game wasn't being programmed by Sega themselves but by the people responsible for Mega Drive hit Ecco The Dolphin. Well since we last saw it the conversion work has been progressing at an amazing rate. So much so in fact that we've just taken delivery of an almost complete version! The wait is almost over!

SkyTarget is perhaps one of Sega's lesser known coin-ops which had a limited release at the back end of 1995. The game was regarded by many as the Afterburner for the Nineties and indeed bore more than a passing resemblance to the classic blaster of old. As you've probably deduced from the screen shots, SkyTarget is an into-the-screen shoot 'em up focussing more on arcade like thrills than the monotony of flight sims. Your mission is to fly into enemy airspace in your state of the art aircraft and locate and destroy a stolen prototype fighter. However that sounds a hundred more complex than it actually is, as essentially the idea is to simply blow everything out of the sky!

The near complete Saturn version appears to be doing a fine job of recreating the coin-op original. Improving on the Afterburner formula somewhat, a choice of four fighter planes have been included in SkyTarget, each of which differ in terms of manoeuvrability. The F-14 Tomcat made famous in the Top Gun movie is in there, as is the F-15, the F-16 stunt fighter plane and the French





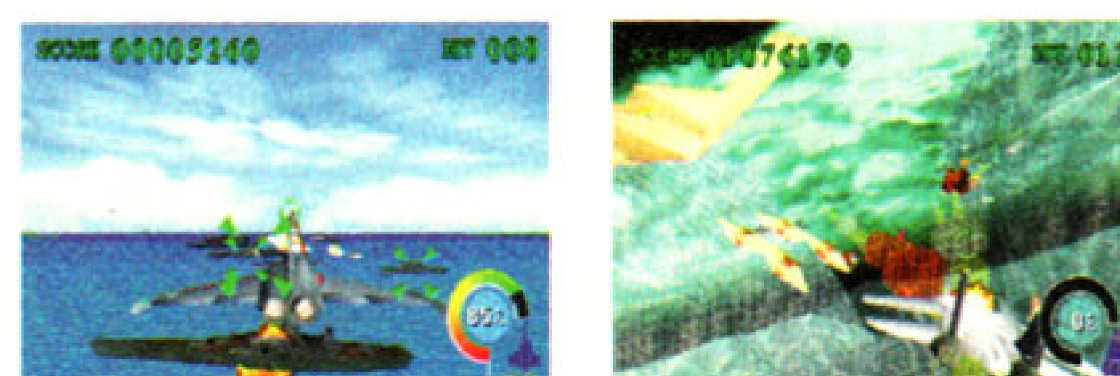
Regarded by many as the Afterburner for the Nineties, Sky Target bears more than a passing resemblance to the classic blaster of old.



The city levels see you weaving in and out of huge skyscrapers.



The dropping-towards-the-ground-at-rapid velocity-whilst-shooting-enemy-aircraft level.



Let rip with the Balkan bombs onto the enemy destroyers.







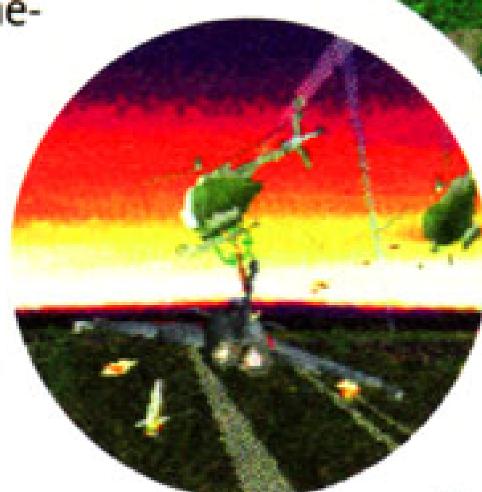
The shallow nature and repetitiveness of Afterburner has been overcome with the inclusion of multiple routes in Sky Target.

strategic mission fighter the Rafale M. Each carry a significant amount of ammo including Balkan bombs, a Vulcan cannon and homing missiles which are unloaded using the lock-on sight to target enemies before blasting them out of the sky. Most of the time you find yourself dog fighting with huge swarms of enemy fighters but there's also an unhealthy amount of bombers, surface-to-air missiles and ground assault vehicles to contend with.

All of the levels now appear to be present in the game with multiple routes being the order of the day adding to the longevity of SkyTarget, something desperately lacking from Afterburner. Whether you're flying through the greenery-fest of the jungle setting, the dimly lit city scape, the rocky canyons or the snow capped mountains, they're certainly varied and graphically pretty good too. There's also a rather odd level which has your plane nose diving at break-neck speeds towards the earth shooting all manner of Stealth bombers and the like along the way. When you've reached the end of each level and fended off the hordes of fighter planes, a huge boss character then awaits you. These are gigantic, heavily armoured flying fortresses which prevent your progression through to later levels unless defeated in the tight time limit. Not an easy task at all.

As is the case with all coin-op conversions some compromises were inevitable. The resolution of SkyTarget has been lowered and clearly the frame has suffered too, being slashed in half to 30 frames per second but still remaining very smooth indeed. Likewise





some of the technical trickery that made the arcade so spectacular has obviously been difficult to replicate on the Saturn with the transparent effects looking slightly ropey.

It must also be said that some of the in-game music is abysmal, whether it be the strange warblings of a frustrated opera singer or the even stranger demented organ playing, it really is quite bad. On a brighter note though, a Saturn specific ranking mode feature has been added to SkyTarget giving it a whole new score attack element. Cool!

Judging by the quality of the competition, it would seem SkyTarget should do quite well upon its release around July time. That means that all things going well we should have the definitive review of SkyTarget just in time for the very next issue of SSM. Be sure not to miss it.



AWESOME BOSSES

Having played SkyTarget most of the way through we can tell you that it features some awesome Panzer Dragoon-style bosses throughout. As the camera pans around you get a good idea of how puny your craft looks in comparison, with it being a dot on the screen next to the gigantic proportions of the boss. The variety of them is most impressive too, ranging from the huge airship fortress on the first level, to stealth bombers later on and even stray nuclear missiles!





The rocky canyons demonstrate some very impressive 3D.



In the midst of battle with the airship boss at the end of level one.





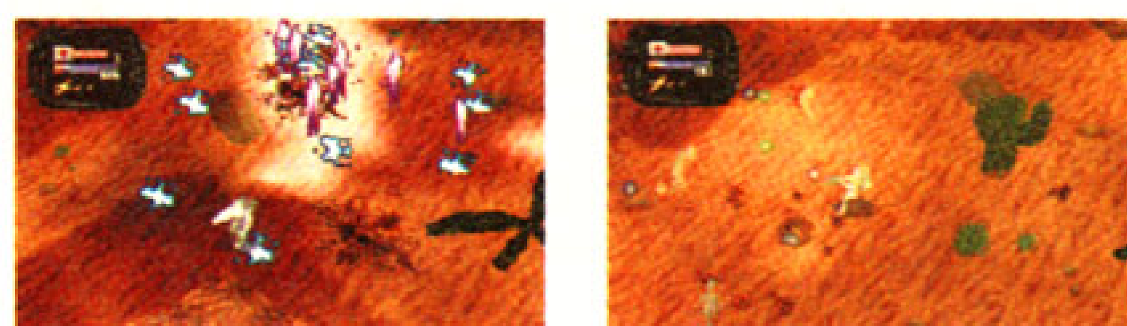
(Left) The spectacular cloudy level towards the end of the game features some adequate transparencies to replicate the clouds.

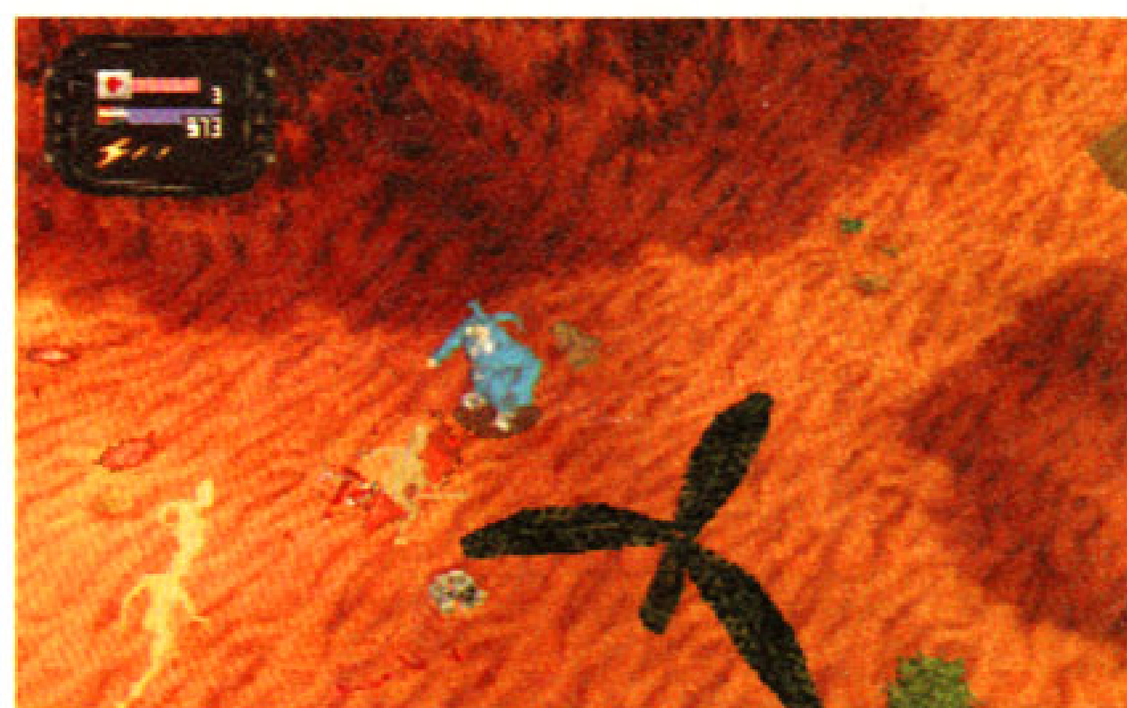
PREVIEW

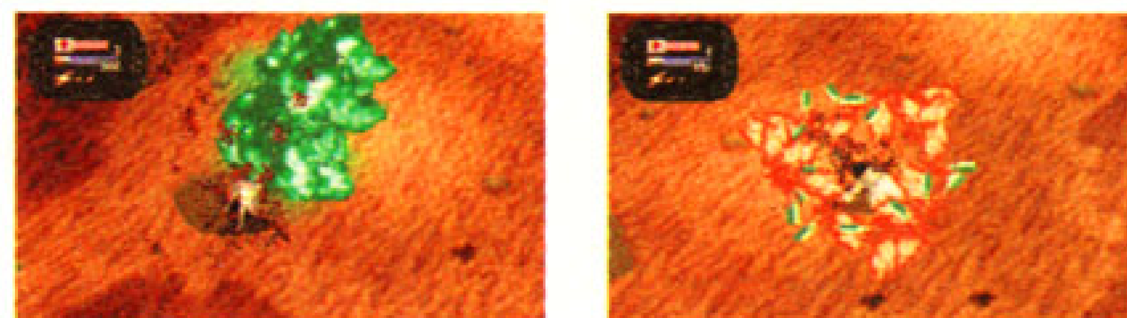
RELOADED

Further showing us their commitment towards Saturn gamers, Gremlin are readying the sequel to their immensely popular gore-fest that is Loaded. The somewhat wittily entitled Reloaded.

BY	GREMLIN
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE	TBA


The good sister unleashes her animal magnetism weapon.

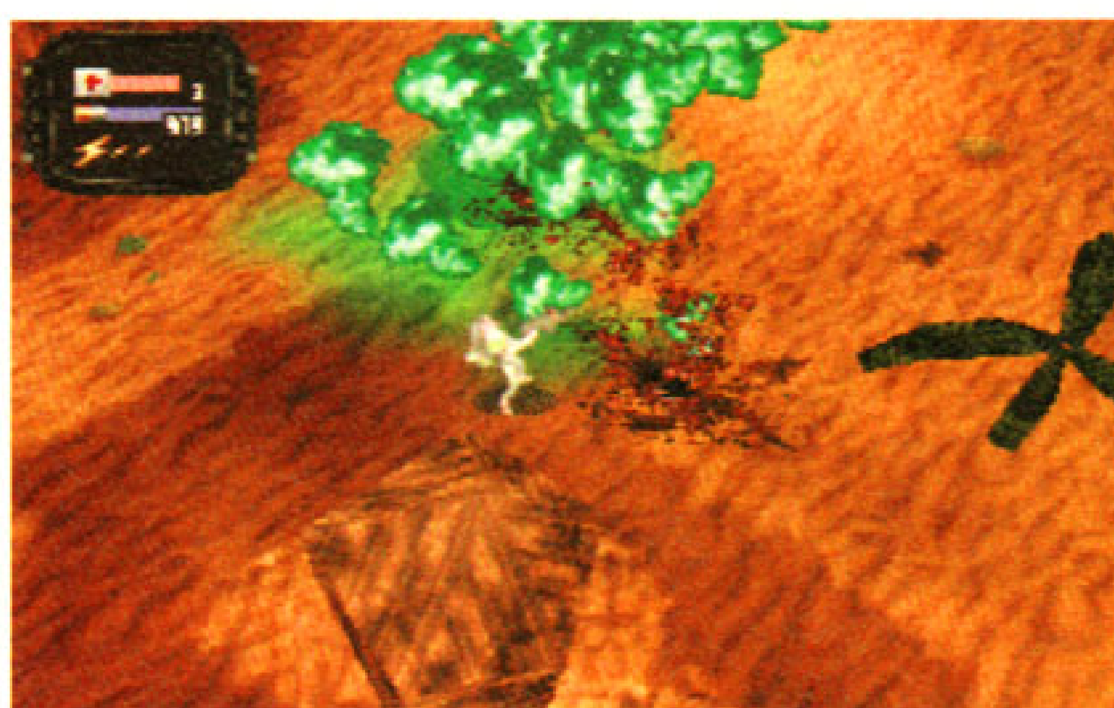

Poor old Mamma. His only crime was that he never grew up like other kids did. But they never sent Peter Pan to jail did they?


The ultra-violent special weapons have made it to the sequel.

SHED A LITTLE TIER

The design of the levels in Reloaded is superior to that of the original, as a tier system has been added enabling the action to take place on several different levels. This is undoubtedly as a result of the criticism Gremlin received over the flat 2D-like environment of Loaded. Rather than just being for cosmetic reasons though, these differing levels are an integral part of the game allowing you to kill enemies from your elevated position.




The Consumer, so called because of her fetish for flesh. Oo-er!


Sister Magpie the psychotic nun is one of two new characters.

Upon its release, Loaded caused a bit of a sensation with its mightily impressive graphics and ultra-violent no-nonsense gameplay. So it was only a matter of time before a sequel emerged promising more gore and more in-depth gameplay than the first. Enter Reloaded.



The original Loaded was set in in a maximum security prison where a group of six homicidal maniacs were attempting to break out. Presumably they made it, as for the sequel four of the original cast members and two new additions are gunning for revenge against the guy that set them up, CHUB. Set some time in the future, Reloaded features two new characters in the form of Sister Magpie, a psychotic nun on the run and the Consumer, who has an unhealthy appetite for human flesh. In similar fashion to the prequel the idea is to battle through the levels killing hordes of people who get in your way.

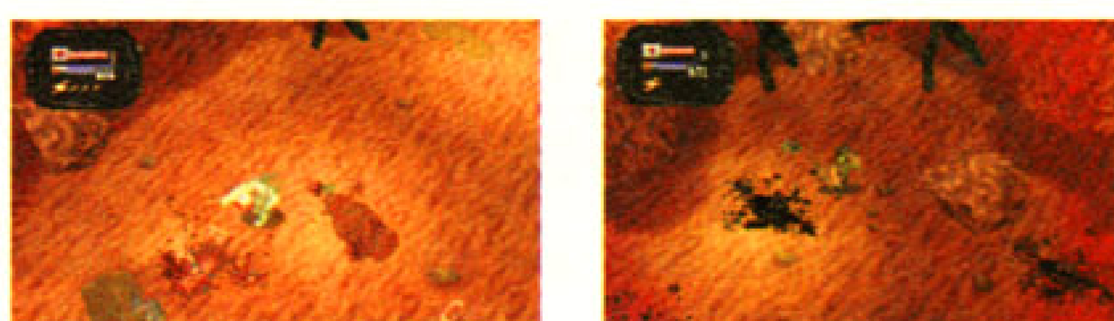
So what's new? Well it's clear from playing Reloaded that the programmers have taken on board the criticisms of the original and made a serious stab at rectifying them. Whereby before all the action took place on one level, for the sequel all manner of ramps and elevated sections have been added looking quite impressive. Likewise Gremlin have made an attempt to address the repetitive gameplay by adding a puzzle element to the game. Previously the idea was merely to blast everything and find the exit keys, whereas Reloaded varies by requiring players to find different objects on every level.

Graphically the game has also undergone a bit of an overhaul, featuring improved light-sourcing and far more variety in the levels instead of the single theme setting of the prison.

We're reserving judgment on this one for the time being, as it really is too early to comment on how it's likely to turn out from the version we have received. You'll just have to wait until next month when we'll have all the latest.


Probably the best all-round character from the first game makes a welcome return, the genocidal Cap 'n Hands.






Finding power-ups becomes an integral part of the game as you tend to quickly to run out of ammo.

Virtua Writer™

You really are a gullible bunch aren't you? We deliberately missed out on the April Fool "hilarity" last month knowing that it would only upset you and cause us a lot of unnecessary phone calls. Not so CVG however, damn their eyes! We have noticed a severe rise in our readers' intellects over the last few months, judging by your letters though, so keep it out. Let's have some heated debate, passionate controversy and what have you. Oh go on. Write to: VIRTUA WRITER, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ. Do it NOW!

A FOOL WRITES...

DEAR SSM

I think your mag is fab and keep up the good work. I have a cheat for Tomb Raider that will make your eyes pop out of your head. I have a cheat to make Lara run



Naked Lara in Tomb Raider. Yeah right! D'oh!

around levels in the NUDE! All you have to do is this: on controller one press the B button in a beat (I found it easy to do to Wannabe's beat). Then on controller two press left and right for about two minutes and some disco lights should appear. Then it will reset to level one and she will run around in the nude for the rest of the game. When you see a wolf it will howl, the gorilla will beat its chest and the T-Rex will drop dead. The worst bit is that Larson is naked as well (I didn't like that bit). Also could you tell me who to get in contact with for someone to have a look at my plans for a computer game.

Gavin McGrath, (Liar, cheat, fraud and plagiarist...LEE) Birmingham

Ripping off another magazine's tips and passing them off as your own is not a good idea as a) it was an April Fool, ergo you are the fool and b) the particular magazine you blatantly ripped off is produced no more than five yards away from my desk. And if your idea for a computer game is as original as your tip, I'd forget it. LEE

A WORRIED FOOL WRITES...

DEAR SSM

First of all may I congratulate you on making such a brilliant magazine and for your unbelievably brilliant demo disks. I can't wait for Sega Flash 4.

Anyway, to the point. While skimming through a copy of CVG I came upon a rather surprising game called "Ultimate Fighting Universe" which is a combination of Virtua Fighter 2, Fighting Vipers, Tekken 2 and Soul Edge!! Imagine my horror upon seeing this as the AM2 beat 'em ups are the main reason we can give Sony a swift two fingers. Sure Tekken 2 and Soul Edge are good games, but AM2's creations piss all over them!

I think that we Saturn owners are getting a bum deal out of this as Sega are exchanging the two best games on the Saturn and in fact the two best games on any PAL system for comparatively second rate games. Please say it ain't so!

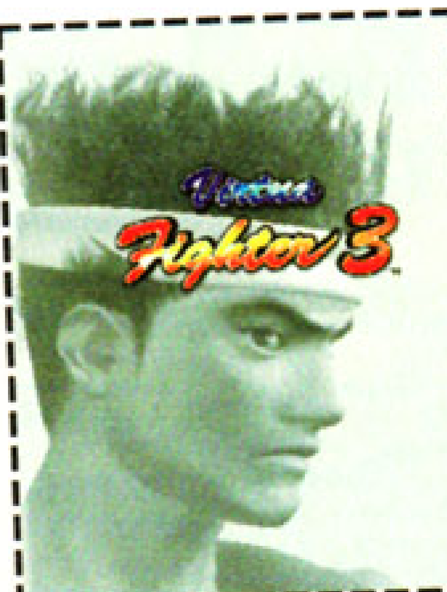
Gavin Bleasby, Leeds



It ain't so. LEE

I grow weary of shovelling someone else's stinking manure. This is another CVG April Fool and you fell for it in some kind of sad, paranoid, sap-like fashion. Now go - or suffer my wrath, young man... RICH

BOOK WINNER



IMPORTANT MATTERS... WHICH NEED TO BE RAISED!

DEAR SSM

This is the first time we have ever written to a computer magazine, but we felt we must as we have some important matters which need to be raised. We have fully backed Sega all of our lives but about a month ago the Saturn seemed to be slipping a little and with the release of the Nintendo 64, our loyalty slipped a little too. We discussed dumping Sega for the powerful machine. That is until we managed to borrow a copy of Christmas NIGHTS and of course read the latest edition of SSM. We were delighted to see the Saturn fighting back with titles like Resident Evil and Duke Nukem 3D.

Anyway we were amazed at Christmas NIGHTS. We own NIGHTS but this is something else. The presents are the best idea ever and so was the fact that you can change the game by adjusting the clock. We were only disappointed with the fact that we did not know how good it really was. Sure SSM gave it good coverage but Sega's advertising campaign is virtually non-existent. We were astonished to see the movies in the presents. Sega could have used those as they would have made great adverts!

One last thing, Sonic Into Dreams on Christmas NiGHTS is great. We feel that Sega could use that as a template for a whole new game!

We hope Sega will continue producing these high quality titles and are sorry we ever doubted Sega.

Phil Read and Adam Coleman, Lincs



A Saturn, packed with two of the best games ever sets you back a paltry £170. And then there's amazing software coming out either exclusive to Saturn or first by many months such as... VF3, Marvel Super Heroes, Touring Car, Duke 3D, Quake... RICH

I AM WELL EXPERIENCED

DEAR SSM

I am writing to you to express my opinions on certain aspects of your magazine and of the Sega Saturn in general. I have owned a Sega Saturn for over 16 months now and have a collection of about 56 games so I think I am well experienced.

My first point is about the VF3 upgrade. You constantly inform people not to believe anything about this upgrade until Yu Suzuki says so. What I would like to know is why haven't you or other magazines mentioned the statement from Andy Mee (Director of Marketing and Sales at Sega UK). In an interview conducted by the now defunct Mean Machines Sega, when asked about the VF3 upgrade he stated that it will happen.

Surely this is proof enough that there will be a Model 3 standard upgrade coming to the Saturn. Mr Mee also went on to mention that the upgrade will be packaged with VF3 and should cost no less than £80 (hopefully).

The main point I am trying to make is that I am rather surprised that no other magazine has mentioned Mr Mee's comments about this upgrade.

My next point concerns your magazine's policy only to review official games (or that's the way it seems). The question I ask is why? There isn't really much difference and it means you could review games a lot earlier. At the time of writing you are the only magazine that I know of not to have reviewed Fighters MegaMix.

One major concern I have is the future of the Saturn. In case you haven't noticed Sony have dropped the price of the Trainstation to £129.99 while Sega haven't done anything. It is already common knowledge that Spacestations are vastly outselling Saturns and I am sure this move will only serve to increase the sales gap. That coupled with Sony's new budget price range could only spell trouble for Sega. Have you any idea if Sega are planning a similar pricing strategy because unless they bring out the upgrade soon there may be no hope for Sega.

Thank you for letting me get some things off my chest, I look forward to your reply.

Stephen Gibbon, Cumbria.



Fighters MegaMix... Should we review an Import versions?



To use your badly plagiarised and unamusing witticism, the "Trainstation" has dropped in price as has the Saturn to an all time low price of £169.99 with any two out of Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally and WorldWide Soccer. LEE Also, when you consider that you get a SCART lead and internal memory with the Saturn (along with two of the best games ever) you find that the Sega machine offers far superior value for money. You've got to be a lunatic not to own a Saturn! As to your other comments... well here we go. We don't review import games because we're official. We review the games you're going to play. So what if Fighters MegaMix has a Tekken-style PAL translation, reducing it to a shadow of its NTSC self? You would want to know. Also, it would perhaps be goading our readers (most of which own official machines) to tell them to go out and buy a game they can't own for months. And also in the case of MegaMix, the UK version benefits from enhancements none of you would know about if we had reviewed the game when we had it in January. So there you go. By the way, Andy Mee was telling MMS of his vision for VF3 - chances are it will come to pass, but all the R&D work is being done by AM2 so until we hear from them, you can't take anything for granted. But mark my words, it will be incredible! RICH

OVER-RATED A LOT OF GAMES

DEAR SSM

In my opinion I think you have overrated a lot of games for the Saturn. X-Men is one of the games which has been overrated. When I played the game it certainly didn't live up to the 92%, it deserved about 60%. Tomb Raider was another game overrated, the game is too slow from start to finish. Out of all the games Baku Baku Animal is also ridiculous. I wouldn't pay 25p for it let alone £25! Daytona CCE was overrated by at least 20%.



Should Die Hard Arcade have received 100%? No.

Compared to Sega Rally it's absolutely shit! You have underrated Die Hard Arcade by almost 20%. I own the game and find it excellent, the game is wicked, it's one of the best. I would have given it 100% not 80%. Can't someone with some common sense give the game ratings from now on?

Kevin Esworthy, Colchester



Hhhmmm. By and large, just about everyone else agreed with our ratings, so assuming that most people have common sense it would appear that it is in fact you who are sadly bereft of it. By your genius-level arithmetic, Die Hard Arcade should have been awarded "almost" 100%. Now take a reality pill and begone - you have angered me beyond measure! RICH

TORMENTS OF EXHUMED

DEAR SATURN MAG,

In issue #17 you had an Exhumed Players Guide so having completed the game I decided to go for the dolls. So two weeks and eight hours later I had all 23 and got the body of Ramses - I was thinking great! flight mode/death tank so doing what you said I overwrote my go only to find there was no flight mode or death tank. I am very angry about this because now I have no saved game. What did I do wrong? Nothing! Please explain or write back or something.

Sean Burke, Dartford



What did you do wrong? Nothing as far as I can see. You should have LoboFlight mode with no problems (and it shows what an awesome version of Descent Lobotomy could program if they wanted to). I've done it and it works. Apologies are due from both us and Lobotomy for goading you with DeathTank. As we said in the feature it works on the Japanese and US versions, but it's not in the UK game because Lobotomy released that version first (and DeathTank wasn't finished then). Sega, Lobotomy and SSM are trying to sort out a way of getting the game to you... Stay tuned. Oh by the way, I know I have championed Exhumed enough, but you MUST own this game. I have never felt such satisfaction from a game as I did after getting those last three team dolls (the last one in particular is exceptionally tough). RICH

BOOBIE TRAP

DEAR SSM

It's been three months since our escape. We like boobies. We think Lara Croft's are excellent and so are Candy's,



By all accounts Lara Croft has great things in front of her.

and Chun Li's and Cammy's etc etc. That's why we bought a Saturn. We compared all boobies on both Sega Saturn and PlayStation and found the Saturn had more and better-looking ones. We were pleasantly surprised, and that's an understatement, to see a Candy centrefold in your February issue. How about a Virtua boobie poster in every mag from now on? In fact, skip the reviews and stuff in lots of boo
bies instead.

RVM, DAVR, King Otto the Third, Netherlands.



So are you telling me it took all of you to write this, eh? By printing your letter I've managed to include four more tits this issue! RICH

BRIEFLY...

DEAR SSM

What are Sega doing? Why don't they back the Saturn the way Sony and Nintendo back their machines? Sony have backed their machine to the hilt constantly lowering the price of their console and a budget range of games. What have Sega done? Nothing. I think it's about time they started to do something.

SEGA Curtis, Reading

DEAR SSM

PlayStations have gone down to £129 which is bound to be a big blow to Sega but it could get even worse... although I haven't seen any games on it that have given the machine a boost. Hopefully VF3 will do this for Sega just like Sonic did for Megadrive...

Lloyd BadHandWriting, Bristol

DEAR SSM

I'd like to know if Sega are going to drop the price of the Saturn and its games like Sony have for the PlayStation...

Terry Murphy, Sydenham

DEAR SSM

Wow what a month. The N64 is launched and Sony annonce the PS will be £130 from March 24. Hopefully the Saturn will undergo a price cut to keep it in competition... some decent advertising please?

Cheers-ears!

Dr Robotnik

This is just a small representation of the letters we've received this month about this issue. What is clear is that Sega have perhaps let Sony take the initiative in this market too many times and always seem to play catch-up. Saturn £399, PlayStation £299. PlayStation £199, Saturn £199. Now the issue appears to have been fudged further - Sony's £129 machine is selling really well, despite Sega offering what is clearly a superior quality package. The Saturn doesn't need a memory cartridge like the PlayStation does (that's £20 saved already) plus you get £95 worth of incredible quality software - being able to choose two out of VF2, Rally and WorldWide Soccer is a frankly incredible offer when bundled with the Saturn for £170. Sega need to match the £129 base level machine and really need to start telling people it has the best games. I've expressed amazement at how cool the upcoming software situation is for the Saturn come Christmas time... what is there for PlayStation and indeed Nintendo 64? Sony's greatest games, Final Fantasy VII and Tekken 3 aren't likely to make it until 1998! And what about Quake and Duke? Again these aren't going to be until 1998 (probably) and even then we haven't a clue about their quality whereas we Saturn owners have actually seen these games and know they will be incredible. And that's without the exclusive Sega arcade conversions (Touring Car, VF3). Saturn has a huge case against Sony, it really does. Sega just need to find enough money and the right way to express it... RICH

Q&A

David Hurst, Chester. Richard Jonson, Liverpool. Craig Jones, Blackpool. David Smith, Leeds. Four letters from the same person... but with different names (obviously losing originality by the time he got to "David Smith"). As if I wouldn't notice, the crazy fool! That's the highpoint of an otherwise dull Q+A. Write some interesting letters, please. No, PLEASE! I'm dying here! Write to: I REALLY HAVE AN INTERESTING QUESTION Q+A, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, London E14 9TZ. Be interesting or be binned!

TROUBLING QUESTIONS

Dear SSM

Please answer my troubling questions.

1. Can you please give me some Saturn specs?
2. Is the Model 3 upgrade really possible as a Model 3 board can handle 750,000 - 1 million polygons?
3. Why don't programmers even try to do transparencies?
4. Which AM department is doing House of the Dead and is it coming to Saturn?
5. Will Micro Machines V3 come to Saturn?
6. Any chance of AM2's Virtua Striker 2 coming to Saturn?
7. What about AM3's Sega Rally 1997?

Dimetrei Ranajan, Somewhere

1. You can make up just about any specs in terms of number crunching so we won't bother. 2. Only time will tell. 3. Hmmm. Try Pandemonium or Exhumed. They have transparencies. Unfortunately, it's easier to do the old meshwork thing. 4. AM1 have done it and it's possible it will hopefully appear sometime in 1998. 5. Yes, within the next few months hopefully. 6. No. 7. No because you either misheard or made it up.

LINK-UP CONUNDRA

Dear SSM

It would be sorted if you could answer my questions.

1. Why is Sega licensing out their arcade conversions? Is to show other third party developers what can be done with the Saturn?
2. A lot of my friends own Saturns and we are wondering about the link-up cable. Any idea when it is out?
3. How many Saturns can be linked up using the cable?
4. As we're on the subject, what games are currently being developed to support the cable?
5. When will we see screenshots of Sega Touring Car?
6. If the Saturn upgrade cart does comes about, will third parties also use it?
7. I see "Naughty Nick" Paterson has joined the team from MMS. Will Angus Swan be doing the same?

Well that's it. Thanks for your time and the mag is looking brilliant (as usual).

Dan Abrams, Great Yeldham, Essex

1. Manx TT went to Psygnosis for development (who contracted it out to Perfect who in turn used Tantalus!) because they're doing the PC version too and Sega's teams were busy. 2. When there is sufficient software to support it. You can get it now from importers but why bother? 3. Just the two. 4. Doom uses it. Hexen apparently does too. Duke Nukem is slated to use it too. 5. Soon. 6. Surely you've heard the Tomb Raider 2 rumours? Apparently yes. 7. No.

NOT THE USUAL CRAP WE CHURN OUT

Dear SSM

Please print my trivial questions as they are far more interesting than the usual crap you churn out in your superb mag.

1. You said your Resident Evil shots were World Exclusives. How come when I was in Berlin the following week I saw a two page showcase packed with Saturn shots in a German mag?
2. With Quake and Duke running on the same engine which do you think will come out top?
3. Most of us Saturn owners had to sell our Megadrives not because we wanted to but because we had to. Don't you feel there's any scope for compilation discs?
4. Still no news on Heart of Darkness?
5. With the release of the N64 and the PlayStation's new price tag isn't it time Sega cracked on with the 3D accelerator chip and show them what a real console can do?

Jonathan Williams, Stockport.

1. I bet my last pound they were PlayStation ones scanned in from a Japanese magazine. 2. I've always been a Quake man myself, but with Duke's multiplayer options and Lobotomy's all-round brilliance I won't make a decision until I've seen both games finished. But both WILL be awesome. 3. It could well happen. 4. It's apparently still in development! 5. Ultimately it's games that count and Sega's line-up is arguably the strongest of the lot. New hardware is a long way off still.



The long awaited FIFA '97... nowhere near WorldWide '97!

WHERE THE BLOODY NORA IS IT?

Right. No pansying about, I want answers and I want them damn quick (ooh, get you - Rich).

1. Ever since issue #13 I have been waiting on tenterhooks to hear news about the allegedly great-looking Grandia. Well, WHERE THE BLOODY NORA IS IT?
2. What kind of game is Into The Shadows and when can we expect to see it?
3. Are you expecting great things from FIFA '97 or should I get WorldWide Soccer?
4. I worship Lobotomy. What have they got planned after Duke Nukem and Quake?
5. I was disappointed with Die Hard Arcade. Any chance of any other games like this (side scrolling fighting games) coming out?

Ryan Bates, Oxford

1. It should be out towards the end of the year in Japan, a couple of months later here. It's going to be awesome. 2. It's like Soul Edge with Quake graphics. And by all accounts it's never going to come out. 3. Answer: not much. SWWS is far, far superior. 4. Exhumed 2 perhaps? 5. There's Core's Fighting Force, coming in Autumn.

MONITOR ACTION

Dear SSM

The monitor I use for my Archimedes A3000 is an Acorn RGB monitor with a SCART socket on the back. I was wondering, could you safely connect my Saturn to my monitor safely? This would mean I would no longer have to use an RF unit. I am reluctant to try in case it damages the Saturn or the monitor.

Charley Coleman, Middlesex

Hmmm I recall plugging my old Megadrive into a monitor exactly like yours. There is no problem at all - essentially SCART is SCART. It's a standard. There's no possibility of harm to either your machine or your Saturn. So plug in with confidence young man and enjoy the benefits that only a full-on RGB signal provides!

FAQ

FAQ is Frequently Asked Questions. Sometimes we just get millions of letters asking the same questions so look here first!

1. Should I get Fighters MegaMix or wait for VF3?

This question kind of hinges on the quality of VF3 and whether it uses an upgrade cart. Still, gameplay-wise the games are a lot different. VF3 is an exercise in precision gaming - Megamix is a lot looser, a lot more of a "fun" game. AM2 would not have released MegaMix if it was going to affect VF3 sales. VF3 is more likely to supercede VF2.

2. What's this NTSC switch you mention? Does it really speed up PAL games?

Various independent shops will be able to fit a switch to your Saturn that turns it into an NTSC system. The uppers: poor PAL conversions become full-screen, full-speed with a flick of a switch. Bye-bye borders. The downers: any warranty you have becomes invalid... and you need a SCART TV that can handle a 60Hz signal, RF doesn't cut it. Sega advise against switches.

3. Is Formula One/Destruction Derby 2/WipeOut 2097 coming to Saturn?

No official word from Psygnosis, but all three ARE in development as we speak. So yes to all three. And no we haven't seen them yet?

So Fargus, So Good

We love our readers here at SSM. No really. We must do. Otherwise why would we go to the extraordinary lengths that we do to produce the very greatest coverage of the best Saturn games? Case in point: BMG's ace Pandemonium! The benevolent LEE NUTTER reports.

After the initial euphoria of discovering that yet another hit PlayStation title is making its way to the Saturn, what follows is invariably disappointment at the lacklustre version we receive. Clearly it is not as if such games could not be perfectly replicated on the Saturn, which has led to various conspiracy theories circulating whereby it is claimed that inferior versions of PlayStation titles are produced to tarnish the Saturn's reputation. However such paranoid theories are laid to rest with the arrival of Crystal Dynamics' Pandemonium, as it is without a doubt one of the best conversions we have witnessed. Although, if we were to subscribe to the greater conspiracy theory it could be suggested that we were being lulled into a false sense of security. Intriguing. Case unsolved methinks.











IT'S A VERITABLE VISUAL FEAST FESTIVAL

Upon loading up Pandemonium you can't fail to be impressed by the quality of the visuals and this is clearly its biggest selling point. Anyone who claims otherwise is obviously a lying ignoramus and will be mocked, ridiculed and chastised accordingly. When programming the PlayStation version, Crystal Dynamics used just about every trick in the book to make Pandemonium as visually appealing as possible. So naturally there was some doubt as to what the quality of the Saturn version would be like, given the general quality of previous conversions. However all our doubts disappeared when the finished version of Pandemonium graced our sweaty palms, being virtually a pixel perfect conversion of the original.

The 3D engine is clearly excellent and this has allowed the programmers to include some of the most amazing levels ever seen in a platform game. The vast amount of them (21 in total including the boss levels) and the sheer amount of variety throughout with each looking completely different to the last is most impressive. From the Fungus Grotto which is reminiscent of of the "Honey I Shrunk The Kids" movies with giant mushrooms abound, to the dangerous Honcho's Logmill with spinning saw blades threatening to slice you into strips, the amount of variety is astonishing. Prepare to be astounded by the stunning set pieces throughout the game, from the water chutes in the later levels to the huge spiky thing on wheels that chases you down the spiral platform. Not forgetting the lift sequence, the bouncy clouds, the giant buzz saws, the killer mushrooms and the springy spider webs. I could go on all day.

This is all viewed from some spectacular camera angles, thanks to the clever "floating camera" that has been employed by the programmers. This bobs, zooms and weaves around to give you the best possible view of the ensuing action. This is done in such a way as to give you enough field of vision to see enemies up ahead, instead of them whizzing onto the screen without you having time to react as in the Bug! games. Now this is all well and good, but clearly some compromises were inevitable. After all the PlayStation version featured an abundance of transparencies which the Saturn is well known for having difficulties in replicating. We were expecting them to be taken out completely or a horrible mesh effect to be present instead. However neither of these is applicable, as the Saturn version of Pandemonium features transparency effects that are virtually indistinguishable >>

Above: Honcho's Logmill is one of the more tricky levels in the game due to huge moving buzz saws that hack you to pieces if you get too close. On a brighter note, this level is one of the best looking, featuring some excellent light-sourcing.







Though it may appear like a dead end, the waterfall proves deceptive as by jumping through it you are taken to the second half of the level with the exit in sight. Yippee!



There are some really cool set-pieces throughout Pandemonium, such as the springy cloud platforms on the later levels which, if you wait too long, tend to disperse thus sending you plummeting to the ground.





Top: Progression to the next stage is made difficult by the huge transparent balls of static electricity that block your path. Below: On the very first level you'll notice a stone statue which can be knocked over to reveal a handy power-up underneath.





Being the sensible kind of girl that she is, Nikki decides to collect the shield to protect her from all the nasty beasties that are out to get her.

>> from the PlayStation original. Transparent clouds, rainbows, shields and weapons are all in evidence and looking excellent.

Hopefully this is a sign of things to come and gives some credit to the theory that it is sloppy programming rather than the Saturn's inability to cope that has resulted in second rate conversions of PlayStation games in the past. Add to this the attractive colour pallet that the programmers used and what you have is a game that looks as good as it plays. As if this wasn't enough to get your juices flowing, the light-sourcing is truly excellent on both the platforms and the two characters and is truly the icing on Pandemonium's cake, metaphorically speaking.





Stand in the right position on the airlift and it is possible to collect the treasure along the way.

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Now you may well be tempted to write off Pandemonium as an all graphics and no gameplay kind of game. However this couldn't be further from the truth, as it is clear that Crystal Dynamics spent equally as much time perfecting the gameplay as they did the graphics. As you're probably aware, the idea is to progress to the right of each of the levels collecting treasure and power-ups along the way and eventually finding the exit. Along the way you encounter various bizarre beasties from dinosaurs to moles, snails and giant mushrooms. These are destroyed in the typical platform manner by bouncing on their heads or using one of the power-ups.



The power-ups themselves are littered about the levels for you top retrieve and each give you quite different firing abilities. For example, one of the power-ups allows you to freeze the beasties before shattering them into pieces whilst another gives you the ability to shrink them.

The begining of one of the many water chutes throughout Pandemonium, this time with buzz saws along the way to spice things up a bit.



However, though it may appear at first that you are simply pressing right for the whole duration, multiple routes have been incorporated to spice things up a bit and add to the longevity somewhat. Some routes are easier than others, but the true pro will always double back and go down both routes to collect all 100% of the treasure that is scattered about the levels, adding to the replay value of the game. Besides the multiple routes, also hidden in the midst of the levels are a variety of secret bonus stages. Therein you are given the opportunity to earn yourself more points by performing a variety of tasks.

For example, in the Dungeon Tower level if you manage to find the secret room you are given the fireball power-up with which to bounce on a trampoline and shoot the target. For every hit you achieve, a coin is awarded for you to add to your collection of treasure.

BEST PLATFORMER ON THE SATURN?

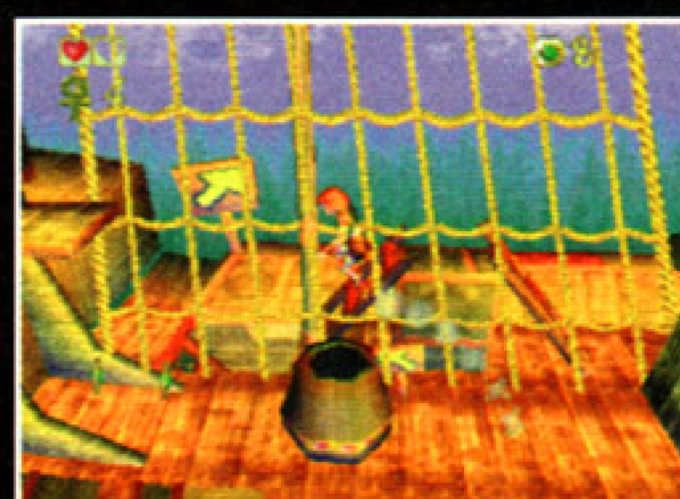
Pandemonium faces some pretty stiff competition upon its release early this summer, not least from Sonic Blast 3D and Bug Too! But what we all want to know is which is the best? Well despite both being very decent games, both of the aforementioned platformers were both flawed in some way or another. Sonic was maybe too short and only a simple port-over and Bug Too! was too difficult and a tad on the slow side. However Pandemonium has the right combination of stunning visuals, speedy and varied gameplay to rule the genre, at least for the time being anyway.



Don't be fooled. It may look as if you are able to move into and out of the screen, but essentially it's a 2D affair.









An integral part of any platformer is the fire-yourself-out-of-the-cannon bit.

Use the bouncy saw blades to reach the higher platforms but being careful to avoid the bear traps littered about the level.



MIGHTY MORPHIN' PANDEMONIUM

Just as children's TV favourite Morph changes from a useless lump of plasticine into a useless lump of plasticine with limbs, so too your chosen character morphs from their human form into that of an animal. One minute you'll be walking along bouncing on beasties heads and generally minding your own business, the next you've been changed into a frog, dragon, tortoise or dinosaur for no apparent reason. Like the main characters each of these have quite different abilities. The frog is pretty useless though it does have excellent jumping abilities, whereas the dragon can fly about the place and breath fire on any enemies. The dinosaur however has the useful ability of being able to skewer anything that crosses its path with the horn on its nose and the tortoise has the ability to walk very slowly.

Pandemonium is reviewed on Page 64.



By far the most useless of the various animals you can morph into is the tortoise, although if you're a girl you'll probably think he looks cute.





The frog has some awesome jumping capabilities which are essential for the Fungus Grotto stage, whereas the dinosaur is good for skewering enemies.



INTRO A-GO-GO

Preceding the game a rather splendid FMV intro sequence introduces the storyline and sets out your impending task. The court jester Fargus and Pandemonium's heroin Nikki, are stood on top of the castle casting various spells which results in a rather spectacular fireworks display. However after being encouraged by Fargus, Nikki attempts a more dangerous spell which has the effect of summoning up a huge monster who then goes about chewing up the surrounding countryside. Somewhat shocked by their blunder they attempt to vanquish the monster, only to find out a missing ingredient is required for the spell which inevitably is located at the end of the game. Your task is to battle as either of the two to retrieve this ingredient and thus banish the monster from this land. There's a lesson in there to be learnt for everyone. Play with things you don't understand and it will invariably lead to an environmental disaster.

Above: Although the FMV window is quite small, the rendered intro is pretty cool and outlines the plot and your impending task.

TWO PLAYABLE CHARACTERS!!

There are two characters to play as in Pandemonium, either Fargus the court jester or Pandemonium's heroine Nikki, though most people will choose to play as Fargus purely because he looks far cooler. Apart from their costume they don't differ a whole lot, except that Nikki can perform a double jump which allows her to leap quite a way higher than Fargus, who in turn has a spin attack with which to defeat enemies. The two of them are interchangeable throughout the course of the game to allow you to choose the character best suited to each level. So for example, using Fargus is essential on the Lost Caves level as his spin attack is needed. But with a massive amount of jumping to be performed on the following Fungus Grotto level, it's best to change to Nikki with her double jumping ability. You see?





Use the bats as a platform to reach hidden items.





Fargus is the better looking of the two characters in a platonic, hetrosexual kind of way, but Nikki's OK too.













The Hollow Stairway has your character running around the spiral platform only to be chased back down again by a huge spiky thing!

HIGHLIGHTS

None of the levels of Pandemonium fail to impress, however some of them are quite simply breathtaking with awesome graphics, stunning set-pieces and some unique twists to the normal platform gameplay. So if you weren't already convinced that Pandemonium is a cool game, then this should do the trick.



Giant springy mushrooms ahoy! In the Fungus Grotto.

LEVEL 2: HOLLOW STAIRWAY

The Hollow Stairway is one of the coolest levels in Pandemonium, which has you progressing up the spiral platform which winds around the hollow tower. Various beasties and obstacles litter your path as well as items of treasure to collect. Once you arrive at the top and collect the key, a huge spiky thing on wheels chases you all the way back to the bottom again threatening to impale you! The key opens the door to the lift shaft, where the camera changes its position to an overhead view to allow you to collect the treasure as the lift ascends. Once at the top you'll be able to take in a good look of the excellent light-sourcing on your character which looks stunning to say the least. Then it's off across the turrets on top of the castle collecting more treasure until you reach the exit.



LEVEL 5: FUNGUS GROTTO

Another really cool level is the Fungus Grotto which unsurprisingly is full of fungus, or giant mushrooms to be more precise. Right at the start of the level is one of the coolest power-ups in the game which allows you to fire a beam which has the effect of shrinking your enemies allowing you to run past them without getting hurt. There's some excellent set-pieces throughout this level too, such as the path of bouncy mushrooms to leap across and the never ending water chutes later on in the level. A shock also awaits you midway through the level as your character is turned into a frog when you progress past a certain point. The middle section of the level is then be completed as the frog with its huge jumping capabilities.







Right: The fiery furnace in Honcho's airship is inaccessable, unless of course you've managed to collect the suit of armour power-up.



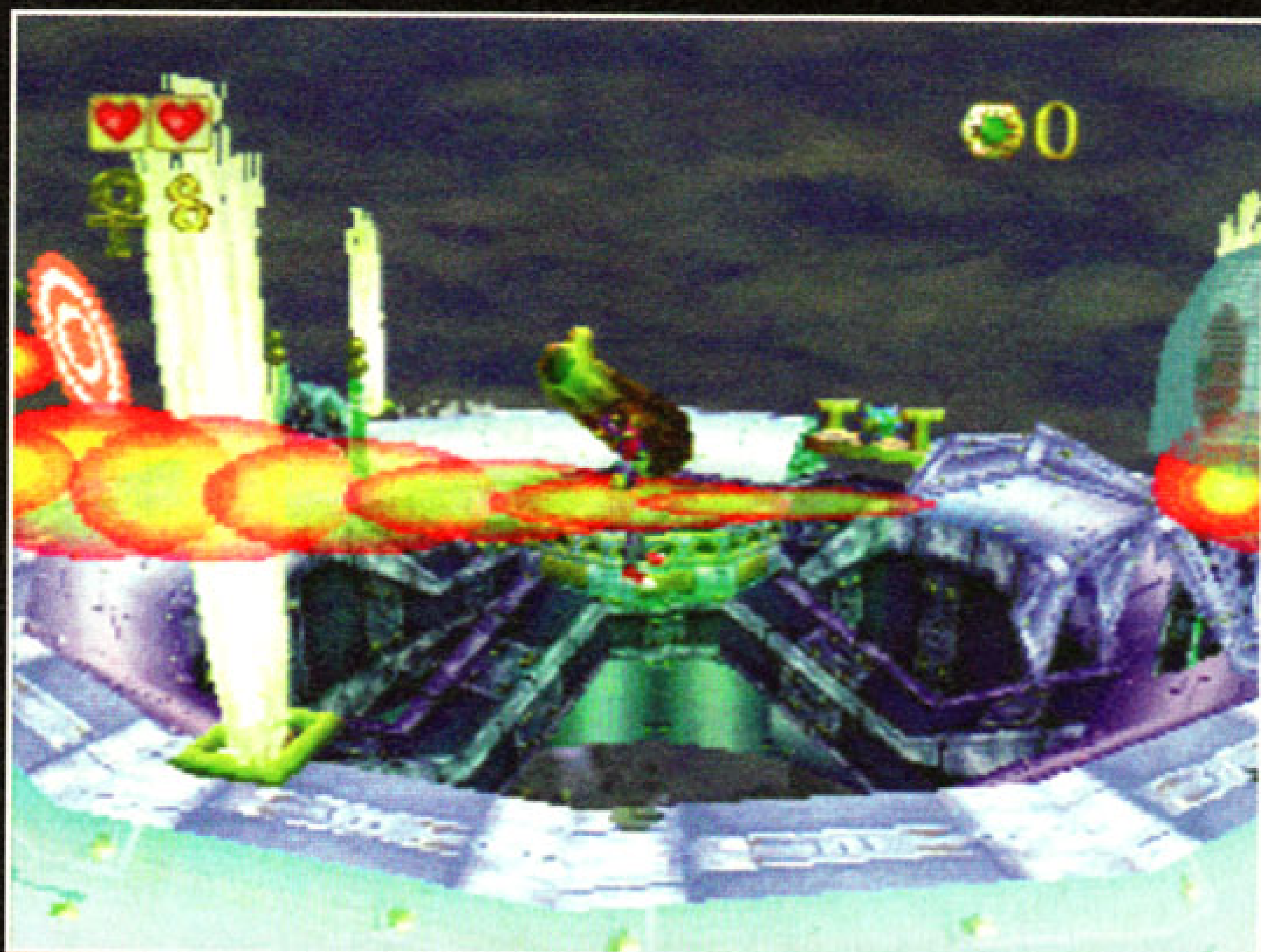
LEVEL 11: SOLDIER BARRACKS

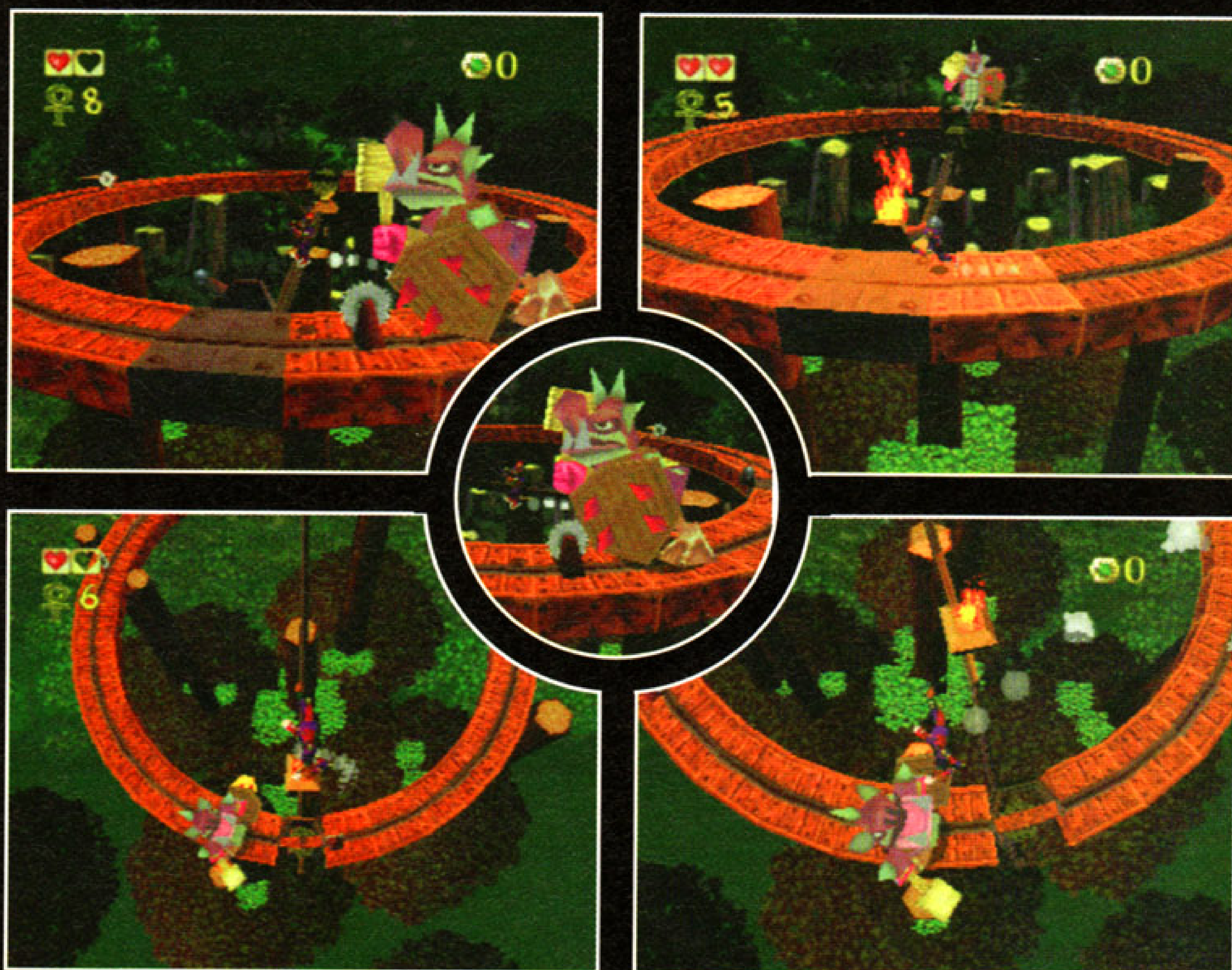
One of the most graphically accomplished levels and fun to play is the soldier Barracks. It features some awesome light-sourcing looking superb on both your character and the scenery and being identical to the PS version. Likewise the hand drawn backgrounds look quite superb, it's just a shame you can't interact with them. This level also features some huge water chutes for you to slide down collecting treasure along the way and a number of cool power-ups. For example, at the end of the first water chute there's a freeze ray power-up and later on an invincible armour power-up. However progressing through this level is pretty hazardous as there is buzz saws at every turn which hack you to pieces if you happen to get to close.

LEVEL 13: HONCHO'S AIRSHIP

Displaying yet more graphical loveliness, Honcho's Airship takes to the skies for some fast-paced platform action. This level features loads of cannons (a standard platform game prop) with which to fire yourself out of reaching previously inaccessible areas. For example, not far from the start it's possible to fire yourself to the top of a dome where a shield power-up awaits you. This kits you out in a suit of armour allowing you to access the bonus room inside the furnace where a large amount of treasure is then collected. Later in the level your human body is morphed into that of a dragon, allowing you to fly through part of the level and breath fire on the various enemies.

Of the three bosses throughout Pandemonium which attempt to thwart your progress, the Wishing Engine boss is by far the most difficult of the lot.





To defeat the Goon Honcho boss, you need to fire yourself into the air before crashing down to earth and hitting him as you land. This is whilst avoiding the rotating buzz saws that chase you around the platform.

IT'S A GAME OF THREE HALVES

Ask anyone who's anyone what makes a decent platform game and they'll tell you huge bosses. Well, they probably wouldn't but it fits nicely with what I'm about to say. Pandemonium features three huge bosses which splits the game into three distinct sections. Each are of the huge bosses are defeated in different ways, which if you don't know how will almost certainly result in your character being impaled with a sharp polygon object. Luckily for you I'm about to share that invaluable information with the world.

BOSS 1 - THE SHROOM LORD

Once you reach the Shroom Lord, he either twats you with his staff or sneezes out mushroom projectiles at you like a deranged mushroom projectile sneezing thing. So the key is to keep on the move to avoid being hit. Run to the left to the ready to launch catapult with a fireball then jump into the air to trigger the torch and throw a fireball at the Lord. Run to the right and set off the second catapult and keep running that way to trigger the third after jumping the gap. The Shroom Lord should now be dead. Hoorah!







The Shroom Lord as you may expect is a huge mushroom that either hits you with his staff or fires pointy mushroom projectiles at you. Using the catapult to fire flaming balls at him should do the trick methinks.

BOSS 2 - GOON HONCHO

Once you manage to reach Goon Honcho, keep running to the left throughout the duration of the battle jumping over each of the buzz saws as you reach them. Along the outer platform you'll find a switch which sends a fiery platform along to the balloon which is inflated by the hot air. Continue running left until you reach the balloon then jump onto it and you're forced into the air allowing you to steer yourself towards the Goon Honcho and hit him. Now run to the left and repeat this process. However after you've hit him for the second time he begins to run about. So when he gets close to you, run under his feet to avoid getting hit. Then run back to the switch to inflate the balloon and repeat this process. Simple!

BOSS 3 - WISHING ENGINE

The final and most difficult boss. The idea is to firstly smash the purple gems by pushing the beams until they are positioned under the gems. Then jump into the beam and soar upwards smashing the gems to reveal the cannon control panels. Now the idea is to shoot the giant eyeball that has appeared, so jump onto one of the controls to start shooting at the eye. To reload it becomes necessary to run to the other side of the circular platform and use the beams again to fly through the triangle which has the effect of automatically reloading. Ten hits are required to defeat the boss and finish the game.







Top: The innevitable death sequence whereby Fargus finally meets his maker. Left: Fargus is blasted into the sky in an attempt to destroy the Wishing Engine boss.

War! What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing of course... unless you're a 31st century hotshot 'bot jockey that is! Activision prepare to go ballistic with a strategy-based shoot 'em up that packs more firepower than a monthly Mafia meeting. Rejected by his Clan (read: ignored by the rest of the SSM team), MATT YEO enters a world of high-tech high jinks.



"The thousands of human-occupied worlds of the Inner Sphere were once bound together in a glorious, prosperous Star League. With the fall of the League, a Dark Age descended, as each of the five surviving star empires warred for dominion. For almost three centuries, the House Lords fought among themselves in the conflict known as the Succession Wars. Opposing sides devastated world after world with armies of BattleMechs: gigantic, humanoid battle machines bristling with enough firepower to level a city. Huge enough to crush anything in their path, these walking tanks ruled the battlefields of the 31st century-until the Inner Sphere met the Clan juggernaut. With their superior war machines, these warrior descendants of the long-vanished Star League Army came to reclaim the Inner Sphere. By forging a precarious union, the five Successor States managed to defeat the Clans. Now, in the year 3058, they have rebuilt their armies with captured Clan technology and stand ready to fight if the Clans renew their invasion. But old rivalries die hard, and new conflicts threaten to revive the age-old struggle between the Houses of the Inner Sphere."

MECHWARRIOR 2 IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 68.





Master the Mech's controls and defeat enemy Clans. Use the radar to spot approaching foes, keep an eye on overheating weapons and repair damaged systems.





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Okay, so all this posturing and name calling may be enough to frighten lesser men but devastated worlds, clashing Clans and warring wobots er... robots are hardly an original subject matter as far as video games go. With a number of first person shoot 'em ups already available on the Saturn (and the promise of such mouth-watering classics of Quake and Duke Nukem 3D) what makes MechWarrior 2 an essential purchase? While the PC original was a thoroughly playable and challenging multi-player experience, the Saturn version would appear to be a simple one-player game stripped of its true potential. The lack of any multi-player options certainly comes as something of an initial disappointment but MechWarrior 2 manages to overcome its own limitations by providing players with a staggering 48 campaigns to tackle, superb control response and silky smooth visuals.

Technically, developer Digital Domain have done an extremely impressive job converting MechWarrior 2 from its PC roots onto a console known more for its arcade-style titles. For starters, the game's graphical engine has been completely reconstructed from the ground up. Running at approximately 20 frames per second, each landscape features expansive 3D environments (including terrain and buildings), are fully textured, Gouraud shaded and realistically rendered with dramatic lighting effects. This graphical lick of paint might seem impressive enough but it's quality gameplay that makes MechWarrior 2 a must-have title. With missions taking players from their humble beginnings as rookie pilots to history making campaign veterans, Activision have produced a game that offers a superb learning curve. But before players leap into their towering behemoths, they must face a challenge almost as testing as the Massacre at Marakaa Valley: the Clan selection!





Collect power-ups to gain superior firepower, health and invisibility.

FRAGILE ALLEGIANCE

In the BattleTech universe, the Clan system is an everyday part of life. During the fall of the Star League, the legendary General Aleksandr Kerensky led his forces in a mass exodus from the Inner Sphere. After settling at the edge of the known galaxy, his followers soon established the Clan system whereby warriors are ranked according to their abilities. Successful completion of each mission eventually boostS your ranking from lowest of the low to that of elite pilot.

Once you've chosen which Clan will gain your valuable combat expertise, pilots are presented with a number of set missions. There are a total of 16 campaigns to undertake in sequential order. These are known as the "Trial of Refusal" and present players with progressively tougher missions which provide numerous campaign objectives such as identifying designated targets, disabling enemy supply lines and neutralising opposing forces. For the Saturn game, Activision have focused their attentions on just two of BattleTech's legendary Clans.





Players pledge their allegiance to either the Wolf or Jade Falcon Clans. An FMV sequence sets the scene for the explosive action to come.



Players need to master the art of hunting (or being a sneaky sod).

CLAN WOLF

Known for their ruthlessness in battle, the Clan Wolf are amongst the most bloodthirsty of all the Clans. As well as the Trial of Refusal campaign, players may also access the Wolf's Dragoons (four missions) and the Freebirth Trials (four missions).

>>





MechWarrior's attention to detail is amazing. Note the enemy Mech's Wolf Clan symbol on its left arm cannon.

Left: 3D landscapes often require players to carefully traverse hills and mountains as enemy Mechs may be lurking around every corner.









>> These additional eight campaigns are best undertaken by seasoned veterans only, as they represent some of the more challenging MechWarrior 2 scenarios.

CLAN JADE FALCON

True to their name, the Clan Jade Falcon are swift in battle, swooping into the battle zone and executing their objectives with surgical precision. The Clan's Trial of Refusal missions are as varied as those of their Wolf brethren while the additional eight campaigns, Crusader Trials and Inner Sphere Trials, are new mini-scenarios created exclusively for this arcade combat edition of MechWarrior 2.

TRAIN TO WIN

To help hone your limited piloting skills, MechWarrior 2 offers players the option of tackling a useful Training mode. This section of the game is vital, even for experienced PC gamers, as the improved speed and manoeuvrability of the Mech's in the Saturn game will require some basic training if players hope to survive more than a handful of encounters. There are six objectives to tackle: Mech Handling, Weapon Usage, Hunting, Inspection and Trial Test, all of which will improve your pilot's potential. For instance, the Mech Handling option provides access to a short slalom course where sharp 90 degree turns must be executed with pinpoint precision. Mastering these manoeuvres will serve you well in the combat zone.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE?

Upon entering a combat zone, players need to instantly familiarise themselves with the surrounding terrain and combat situation. While the game is only ever played from inside the Mech's cockpit (there are no exterior views or alternative angles to choose from) the HUD, or Heads-Up Display, provides players with all the information they require for a successful campaign. Vital data is relayed to the Mech's various computer systems allowing pilots to analyse a given situation and act on it immediately. The radar highlights the location of both Friendly and Enemy Mechs as well as objectives and incoming fire. Other displays show the status of a player's armour and firepower with red flashes highlighting damaged sections in need of urgent repair. The weapon systems in particular require close attention as sustained firing, or constant combining of weapons, results in overheating, a common malfunction amongst Mechs but one that can prove fatal. If your systems do overheat, and enemy Mechs manage to target your stricken craft, the results can be devastating to say the least. Conserving firepower and knowing when to switch to auxiliary systems are the two key lessons to learn if players hope to reach the glorious heights of Nova Colonel and beyond.

Below: Damaged systems and overwhelming odds will test the mettle of even the toughest warrior.









For some strange reason, Activision have removed the multiple viewpoints available in the PC version.

THE WRATH OF KHAN

A BattleMech pilot begins his career as a humble MechWarrior - the lowest ranking member of the Warrior Caste with the right to command a Mech. A MechWarrior's ultimate goal is to become Khan of his Clan. For this highest honour, a MechWarrior must excel throughout his career by achieving each possible rank and surpassing the highest levels of Clan honour before being invited to the last Trial of Position for Galaxy Commander and Khan, or Clan leader. The ranks are:

1st Rank: MechWarrior
2nd Rank: Star Commander
3rd Rank: Nova Commander
4th Rank: Star Captain
5th Rank: Nova Captain
6th Rank: Star Colonel
7th Rank: Nova Colonel
8th Rank: Galaxy Commander
9th Rank: Khan



Have you got what it takes to become the main Mech man?



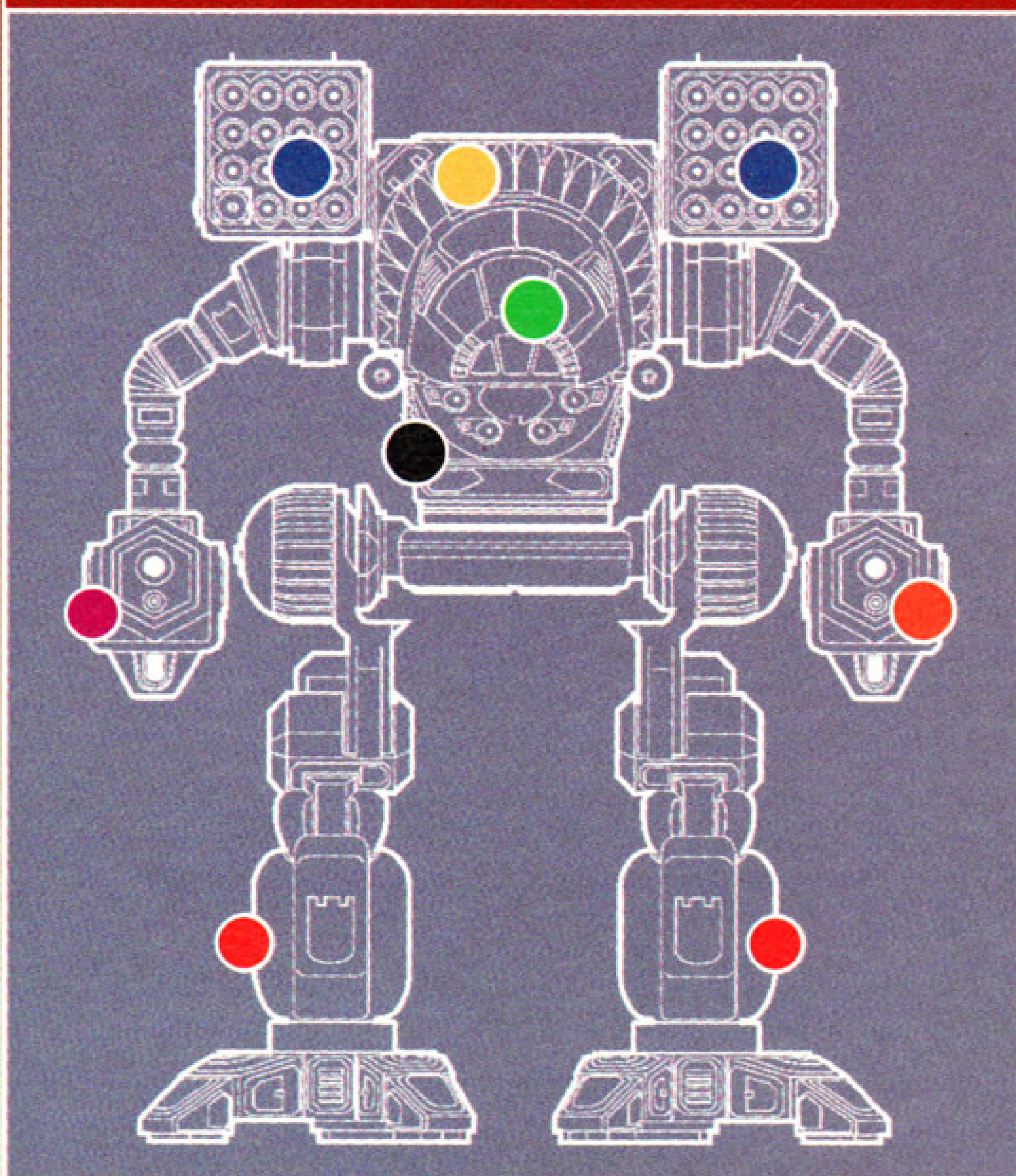
CLASH OF THE TITANS

Although there are specific Mech's designed for certain missions, each machine follows the same basic construction pattern. As plodding engines of destruction, each Mech is powered by a self-contained fusion reactor which provides power to all systems including weapons and propulsion. Housed within a titanium casing, the reactor is well shielded although repeated enemy fire can rupture the primary cooling system. Shown below is the Timber Wolf, a multi-purpose Mech that's as comfortable with both hit-and-run missions as well as "up-close and personal assaults."

TIMBER WOLF

WEIGHT: 75 TONS
SPEED: 86 KM PER HOUR
CLASS: HEAVY ASSAULT MECH

- DOUBLE LRM-20 MISSILE RACKS
- BLAST PROOF ARMOURED COCKPIT
- POLY-CARBONADIUM SHELL



- EXTENDED-RANGE LARGE LASER
- EXTENDED-RANGE MEDIUM LASER
- 2 X EXTENDED-RANGE SMALL LASERS/MEDIUM PULSE LASER
- DUAL HYDRAULIC TERRAIN TRAVERSION SYSTEM

JUMP JET PACK (NOT SHOWN) ONLY AVAILABLE ON MISSION SPECIFIC MECHS.



STATE OF THE ART

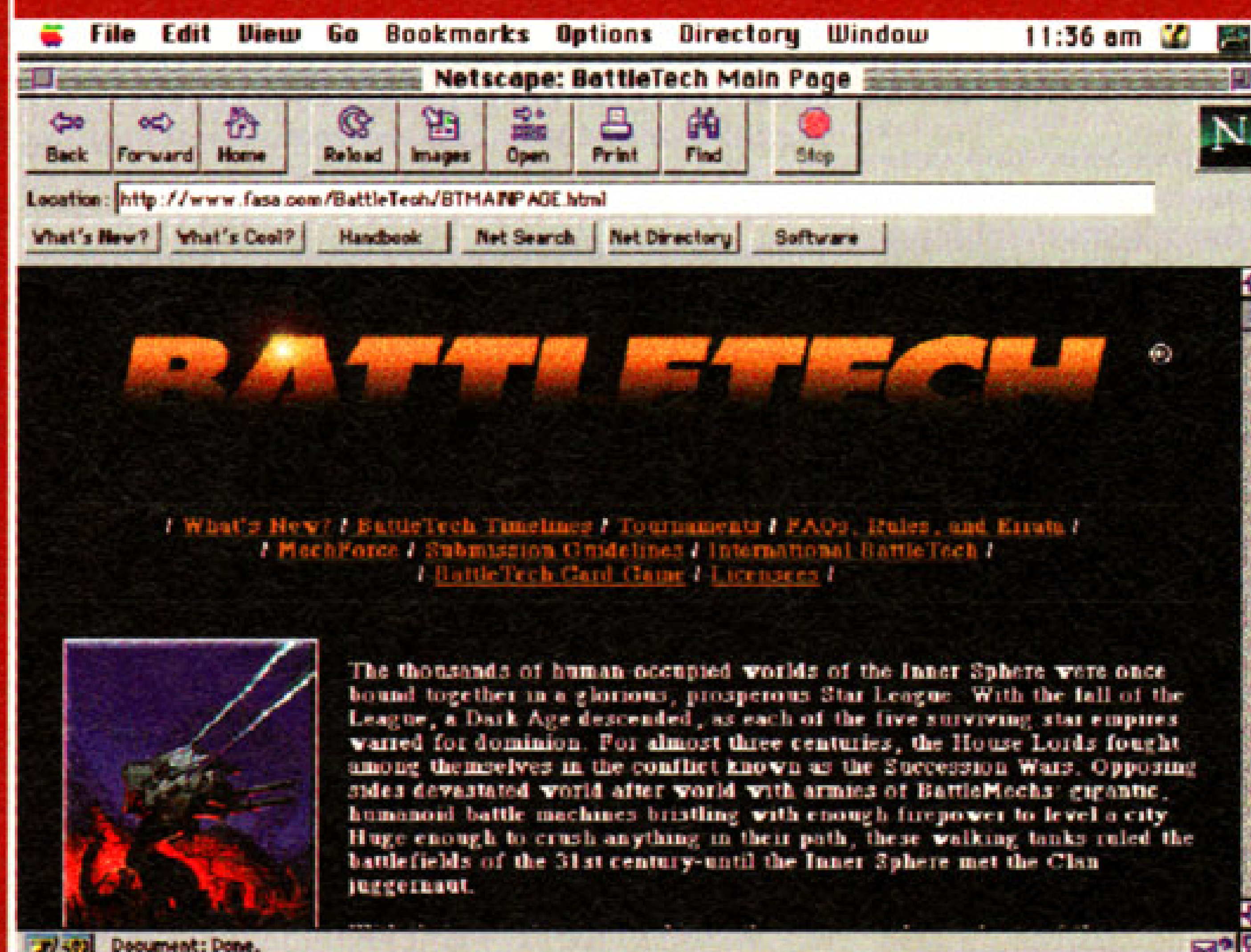
Although each planet is a foreboding challenge in its own right, Mech pilots are offered support in the form of various power-ups. These rotating, cube-like items are dotted around each zone and are also contained within both primary and secondary targets. To collect the item simply walk over it. Each power-up provides a limited boost to a particular Mech system and is activated immediately upon collection.



Use the Mech's jump jets to hover above targets when undertaking search-and-destroy missions.

BATTLETECH ONLINE

For more information on the world of Battletech and MechWarrior, players should definitely check out the FASA website located at **http://www.fasa.com.** This fact packed Internet site offers insight, history and links relating to the RPG games that have made FASA one of the leading fantasy gaming companies. As well as regular updates and previews of forthcoming products, the site also offers visitors unique products and exclusive merchandise.





MechWarrior 2 is a blast! High-tech weapons, multi-ton Mechs and action galore make it an awesome Saturn game.

Ark de Triumph!



The Saturn is the current machine of choice when it comes to role-playing games, and these adventures don't get that much better than this! So says RICH LEADBETTER.

At several points during my short tenure on SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, Shining Wisdom has been the bane of my existence. There I'd be, happily writing away or speaking to some super-powered member of the software industry when the 'phone would ring. Odds are that the caller would want help with Shining Wisdom... Arghghghghh! Well now I am prepared. The new Shining game promises to be even more popular but at least this time I'm going to play it right through to its glorious conclusion. Not that I particularly want any more tips calls, please.

There is plenty to get excited about with the upcoming release of Shining the Holy Ark. First of all, its pedigree is enough to get a huge amount of people purchasing the new title; after all just about >>



The King has decreed that notorious outlaw Rodi should be captured. Enter the heroes!



Melody and Forte join you! Being a swordsman, you supply violence – they provide the magic!



Confronting Rodi, your team decide to take him down! A fierce battle later and he's defeated!



Your victory is cut short by a mysterious cave-in leaving you right on the very edge of death!

MAPPY

Navigational through the land of Shining the Holy Ark is achieved with a lovely map, showing you where you are and the various destinations you can reach. The Forest area and the mountain cave link up parts of the map you can't access via the usual roads (although map geography changes later). Move your icon character to the place you want to be and press your button NOW!

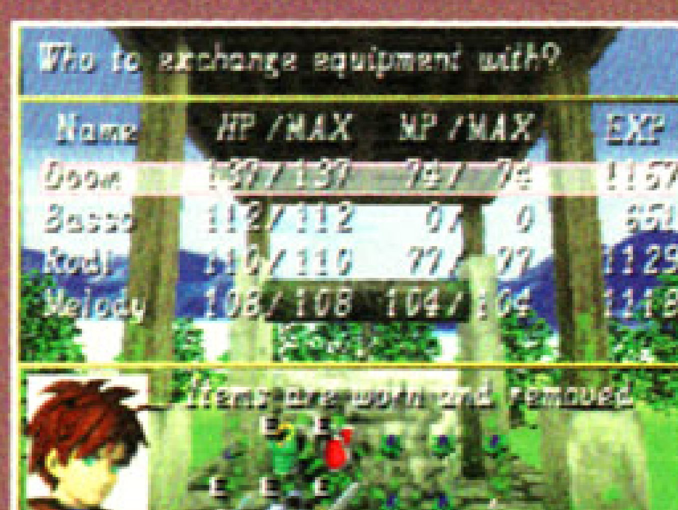


ANYTHING YOU CAN DO I CAN DO BETTER

The Shining games have always been extremely easy to get into (but tough to complete - just ask the legions of Shining Wisdom players out there) and this is done to the easy to use icons system, which actually hasn't changed all that much since the first Megadrive Shining epic.

The basic format gives you four commands at choose from, using a diamond arrangement of four icons. Selecting one icon leads on to another selection of four, or if an object or character is involved it switches to the character select screen. It's a really simple system and it works for everything in the game, making Shining the Holy Ark a real joy to play!





ANATOMY OF DOOM

What is your character about? What are magic points? Hit points? What on Earth is DEF and LCK? It's all a series of abbreviations concerning the statistics of your character. Here we have a breakdown of my character, Doom (named after my favourite super-villain of course), along with an explanation of what he's about. I'd say I'm midway through the game now, and Doom's looking pretty good. Armed with one of the sacred artifacts he is now a Champion level fighter and on the look-out for a new challenge. Well he could start by tracking down the Sacred Mirror...

CLASS
This is what Doom is... in this case a level one champion! Character classes include swordsman (a more basic form of champion), shaman, ninja and warrior. Each has their own skills in terms of attack, magic and so forth.

STATISTICS
These indicate how powerful Doom is when it comes to attack and defense (both physical and magical) along with his hit and magic points. Hit points is basically how much energy you have-poisons. Magic points power your spells.

Doom Champion LVL 1 Healthy
HP 156/160 ATT 195 TEQ 50
MP 77/89 DEF 115 LCK 55
AGI 73 MD 39
EXP 22782 CRT 81 BD 83
Sword/Tool
Magic
Sacred Sword

SPELLS
This is Doom's repertoire of magic. Being a fighting based character as opposed to a magician, his spells are mostly fight based. Heal, avoid monsters, lightning and escape from dungeon form the four here.

ITEMS
This is what Doom is carrying. Mostly it's weapons and armour, along with a key or two. Notably, Doom's in possession of the Sacred Sword - one of the three power items required to finish the game!

every Shining game has been an absolute classic and judging by the 93% rating it receives this issue, the new game is no exception.

Secondly, Team Sonic - the creators of the Shining games - have really added a lot to the basic concept. Although the simple-to-use icons system remains as cool as ever, Sonic have added a new 3D engine which although only functional-looking in some areas, looks brilliant in others... especially later on.

What hasn't changed is the ace Shining emphasis on combat and character progression - although all this fighting oftens gets in the way of the puzzle solving, it's the only way you can better your fighting force... and this is essential to progressing through the game.

Shining the Holy Ark is currently my favourite game by quite a chalk (my recently acquired N64 Turok remains in its packaging, believe it or not) and the reason is simply that it is a hard game. Every fighting section is a real tactical challenge and the puzzles range from mildly taxing to super-hard. When you reach the first sacred artifact you're confronted with a mathematical nightmare - seven stones have to be distributed between two statues. Easy eh? Well no, the value of the stones has to be equal. To "help you out" seven facts about the value of the stones are given: for example, sapphire is worth the value of black onyx and opal put together. Aquamarine is worth half of black onyx. You get the idea. "Tough" doesn't even begin to describe how difficult this puzzle is!

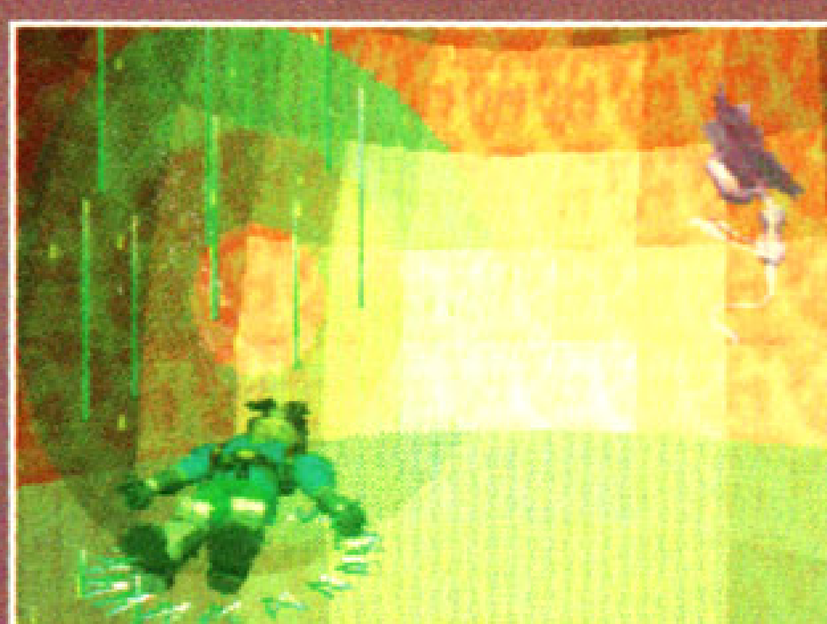
All this... and the quest is really just beginning!



The enemies can be just as adept at you at the old spell-slinging activities. A good thing it's three to one!



Forte the wizard is possessed by an evil spirit escapes. The good spirits arrive just in time...



The spirits possess you, Rodi and Melody! As long as you stay together you cannot die!



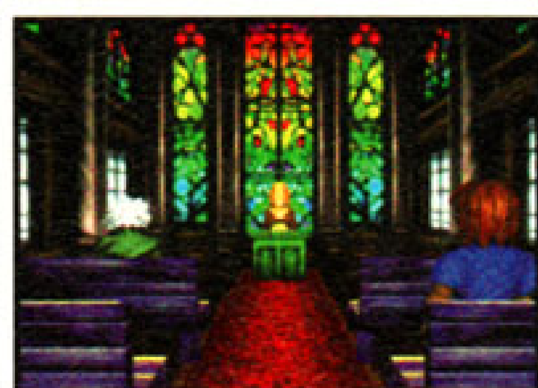
Questions remain. Where is Forte? Who is Rodi? Is he evil? Are you really the Chosen Ones?



Returning to reality, your team realises they need to band together to get answers!

THE EPIC CONTINUES!
Emerging from the mines, our heroes travel to Desire Village. Once a thriving town owing to the deposits of mithril ore in the mines, it's now a tiny hamlet...





Desire Village has a church, weapons shop and pub - and each of these is essential to your quest. First of all, our heroes visit the church to save their position!



Entering the pub, our valiant pals are intent on a bit of rest and recuperation. However, more essential to your quest are the tidbits of information you glean from the locals...

THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

Between the main areas of Shining the Holy Ark you tend to find villages or towns. Regardless of their size, these places offer much the same in terms of amneties. These places are where you recuperate after the battering you take in the monster-infested levels. The towns are devoid of all violence, and it's here that the majority of the plot progression takes place. It's also here that you equip yourself with new armour and weapons, to make yourself a better fighting team!

The villages are also the only places in the game (bar one or two exceptions) where you can save your position (onto either the system or the back-up cartridge directly). That being the case, it's often wise to check back to the nearest village and save your progress through the following level.



Of course, although each settlement has its similarities, there are plenty of differences too.

DESIRE VILLAGE

This village gained size immensely once the mithril ore from the mines began to be extracted. Now all of the ore has gone and Desire is not little more than a waypoint for mercenaries and adventurers and the mine itself has been taken over by the foulest denizens of evil! In addition to its pub, inn and church, Desire also boasts the best blacksmith in the kingdom, so once any precious metals come into your possession you should head back to Desire post haste!

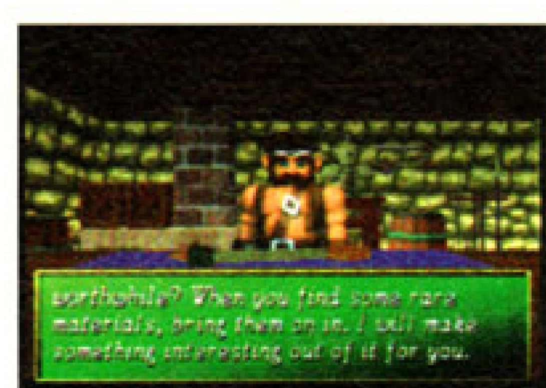


ENRICH

The largest settlement in the game by quite a margin, Enrich is a huge town characterised by its brilliant architecture. It is also the home of the King, who has his castle on a hill just to the west of the main town. There is also a town well, which connects to an underground dungeon that encompasses all of Enrich and the nearby castle, and forms the essence of an escape route should you fall foul of the. The church is also the most magnificent in the game too! Quite clearly this is the "capital" of the kingdom...

FAR EAST VILLAGE

Thanks to the King closing the border, there is only one way out of Enrich - and that takes you into the horrors of the mountain path. Far East Village is pretty remote. It's the most technologically backward area in the game, with the village's inhabitants strongly motivated by magic and the mystical arts of the ninja. That being the case they sell the most powerful weapons too. It is here that Rodi hails from and it's here you an get some answers...



Being near to the mine, Desire Village also happens to host the greatest blacksmith in all of the land. Give him some ore and he'll knock up some amazingly powerful gear!



Reaching the town of Enrich is priority... and the only way through is to wade through the monster-packed forest!





KNEEL! KNEEL BEFORE ZOD!

You cannot argue with the importance of the church in Shining the Holy Ark. Whether you're religious or not, there is no denying the power of the clerics inside these sacred buildings. Although perhaps we should question the wisdom of worshipping the principal supervillain from Superman II.





RECORD
Ask the priest to record your adventure and that's exactly what he does.

REVIVE
Zod has the ability to channel his regenerating power through his servants, allowing them to raise team members from the dead.

CURE
If you get poisoned by an enemy creature, the priest can help you. By curing you of course!

CHANGE CLASS
Once your characters have gained enough levels, they can move beyond the classes assigned to them at the beginning of the game. Go from swordsman to champion for example!

DOWN THE LOCAL

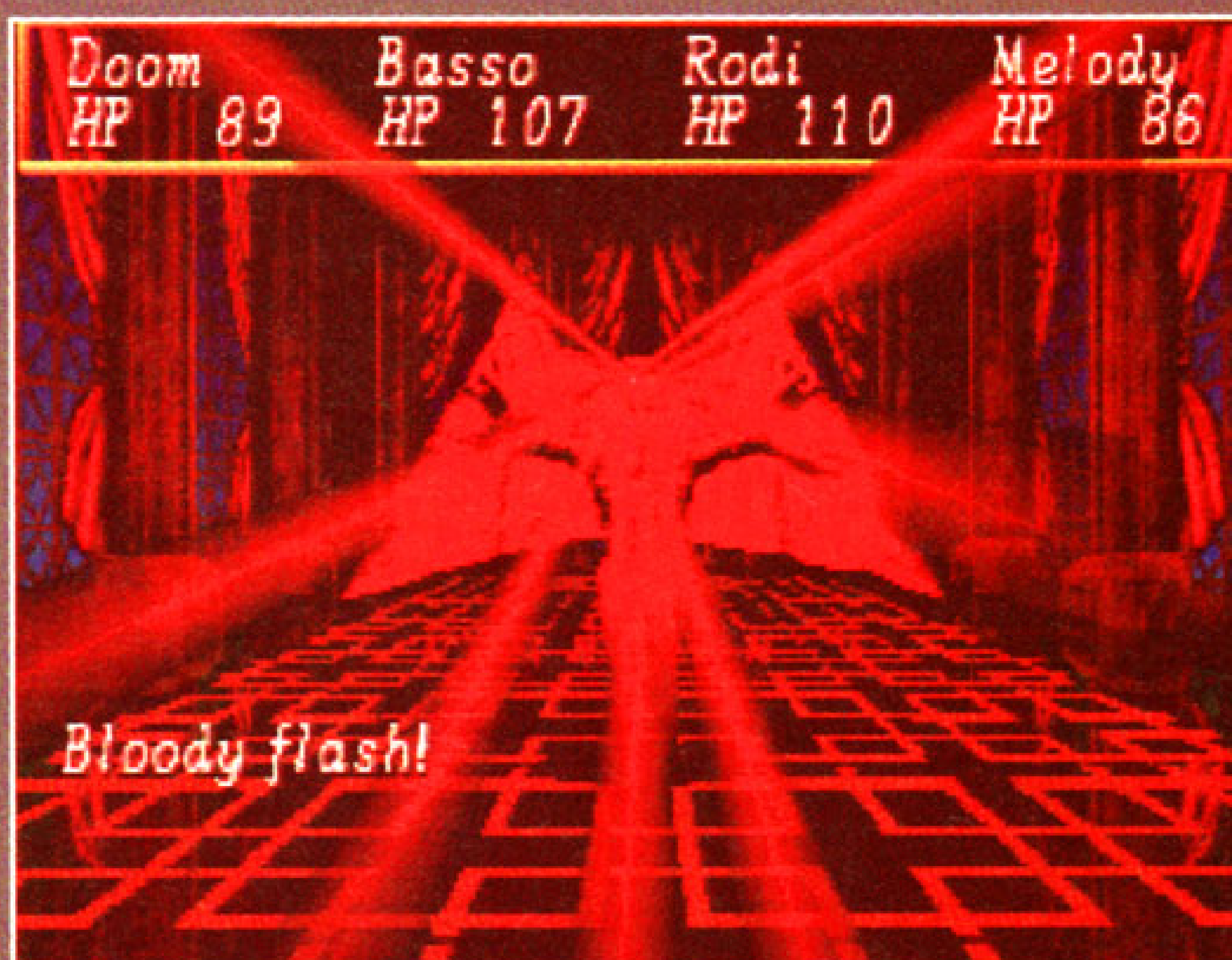
In the land of Shining the Holy Ark, the local public houses serve two functions... and oddly enough drinking isn't one of them. First of all they serve you best as a source of information. Pubs are always packed to brimming with local inhabitants (and maybe even competing mercenaries) all of whom should be quizzed. Secondly, pubs are also inns, and you can stay the night for a very small fee. This has the benefit of restoring all of your magic and energy. Lovely...



As you can see, questioning the locals is the key way to getting information about the political landscape and the enemies you'll be facing later in the game!



Lisa the warrior is giving you a bit of grief at the beginning of the game. Later on, she and her dragon knight pal Basso actually join your team. Looking after them becomes your responsibility. But that's later...



The further you get, the more vicious the monsters' attacks!





TOOLING UP

Your party aren't going to get very far without better equipment - that is, superior armour, stronger weapons and other such stuff. Luckily, there's a tool shop in every major town and village in the epic videogame that is Shining the Holy Ark!



WEAPONS These are split up into the class of character who can use them. Swordsmen use the swords (obviously), the magically inclined go for the staffs and ninjas settle for katana. Recruit a warrior and give 'em the axe!



ARMOUR Just like weapons, armour is split between the character classes. There are also various types of armour, such as helmets, braces, gauntlets and of course



TOOLS This smaller area of the hardware shop is taken up with the smaller tools. Typically these are small items designed to help you out, such as herbs, powders and such and such.



The cemetry is home of the most deadly creatures you will have met yet. None are more deadly than this enormous reaper boss, whose debut is marked with some mega FMV!



A vast maze of underground passages await you before you reach Enrich. Although not too taxing, your team are down to low health following the confrontation with the last boss.



Emerging from the forest caves, you move onward. Enrich is huge Elizabethan style town, replete with its own castle! Now is the time to get some answers from the King... but he's possessed by an evil spirit. And that witch is powerful too!



Escaping the castle, you meet up with Sabato who sends you on a quest in the dungeons under the town. Can you find the key to the mysterious mansion to the west?

THE PLOT THICKENS...
Things are not looking good for the Shining posse. The forces of evil have possessed the king and all the heroes have is a key to a forboding mansion. Are the rumours true? Is there really a creature of incredible power lurking somewhere inside? Can he offer any information that can restore peace and tranquility to the land?



The mansion is surrounded by dense woodland. Although the creatures inhabiting it are very powerful, the experience and the tools acquired so far give our heroes the edge they need.



The mansion is packed with more monsters to take out, along with a distinct puzzle to solve. An old clock needs to be activated in order to open up a secret passage...



There are a lot of logic puzzles in the mansion. This once simply involves moving furniture about to match a wall-mounted plan. Many secret passages like this are to be found!



Once the guardian of the clock has been defeated, you meet Galm. An ancient being of incredible power. He tells you that you need three artifacts to vanquish the evil spirits!





LET THE COMBAT BEGIN!

It's okay having an enormous great adventure to contend with, but the bottom line is that an RPG isn't an RPG without a combat system of some sort. Shining the Holy Ark uses a turns-based system similar to other RPGs and by using this system, Team Sonic have created a finely crafted tactical sub-game. To be frank, it starts off being quite repetitive, but the more you play it, the better you characters get at fighting and the more things they're capable of doing. Fighting is split up into two areas:

PHYSICAL BATTLING

This is literally a case of swiping at one of the opposing enemies with your chosen weapon. Obviously swordsmen and warriors are better at this than sorcerers and shamen. Typically, you score more points of damage with a physical strike than you do with a magical barrage.

MAGIC STRIKES

Magic is a most powerful force indeed in Shining the Holy Ark. The advantage of a magical strike is that one spell hits every enemy on the field as opposed to the limited strike capabilities of the physical attack.

SWORDSMEN! WARRIORS! FORWAAARD!

Physical attacks are the preserve of the swordsmen. Although your character (called Doom in our case, although you can call him whatever you want) starts out only hitting for about 7 points of damage, this is good enough for the lower end monsters you face. Things really start cooking when your character reaches around level 20 - then he can become a Champion, and armed with the Sacred Sword scores well over 100 points for one strike! Speed and attack potential are the combination of your character's equipment and their power.



FAIRY ATTACK!
It's actually cool to hang out with fairies in Shining the Holy Ark... They provide a pre-emptive strike in combat situations. The more they attack, the better they get at it.



POWER ATTACK!
Occasionally, your character unleashes a power attack, which typically adds on between 30% to 100% of damage to your normal strike. Cool!

MAGES! READY YOUR SPELLBOOKS!

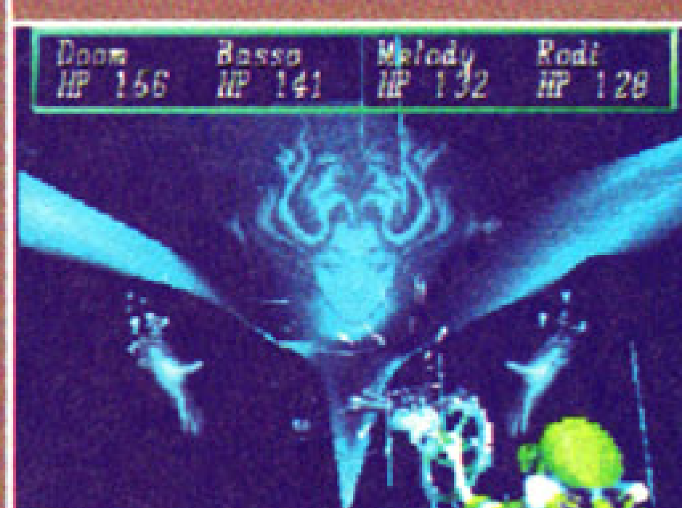
Throughout the entire game that is Shining the Holy Ark, your mages are extremely important. In the early stages of the game they are weak, barely worth attacking with using either physical means or mystical. Instead they play the part of healers, using magic to restore energy to the party. Later on though, spells become more potent, and since they hit every enemy target, sorcery is a key factor in blasting down the opposition should they attack en masse!



THUNDER AND LIGHTNING!
There are various takes on the old lightning strike in Shining the Holy Ark's offensive spells. Lightning is pretty obvious, but the Spark spell is pretty much the same.



BURN BABY BURN
Brutal Fire is a great spell at the disposal of the ninjtion. It's very strong, especially at higher levels of strength. The Blaze spell is virtually identical.



SUMMON THE ELEMENTALS
Melody the Shaman has access to the elements, allowing her to batter the monsters with wind and water. At higher levels it's deadly!



TACTICAL SPELLS
Other spells for use in battle allow your mages to bolster the strength of the party, boosting health, speed or attack potential.





A bit of ghostly mine action from the beginning of the game (left) whilst a Leprechaun is found inside the mansion (right).



The powerful Vandals hold the key to the secrets of the Thousand Year Kingdom. Want to know what we're talking about? BUY THIS AMAZING GAME THEN!



More incredible promotional artwork from Shining the Holy Ark. Here we see the hero facing up to one of the most deadly creatures in the Shining world. What is it? We aren't telling... yet!

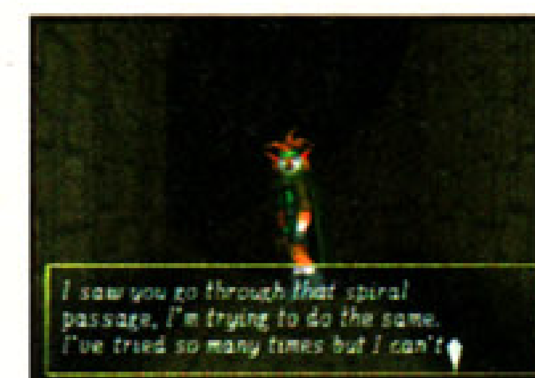


This rendered artwork from Shining the Holy Ark shows the wizard Forte at work (centre). He gets possessed by evil spirits at the beginning of the game, but rejoins the band later once you rescue him (which is super-tough by the way!).

RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

The Team Roster of your Shining Force isn't static. Although yourself, Rodi and Melody are the regulars, others may from time to time crop up to join your team. Once they do so, they are controlled in battle exactly the same as your basic trio. One note of warning though: your basic three characters are invincible, owing to their possession by the mystic spirits at the beginning of the game. The new recruits are just mortal and if they die, an expensive revival ceremony at the nearest church is essential to get them on their feet again.





The first port of call is the South Shrine. Galm gave you a mystical object - an artifact that allows you to walk on the ceiling! You'll need it.



Walls pop up out of nowhere! However, if you can find the right spiral walkway, you can progress past these areas. Pretty intricate brainwork is required to get to the shrine!



At the shrine, a mathematical puzzle of huge difficulty (like A-level Maths at least) awaits. Solve it and the incredibly powerful Sacred Sword is yours! That's if you can defeat the mother of all boss guardians!

WHAT NEXT?
It'll take you about 15 hours of gameplay just to get this far into Shining the Holy Ark... and that's if you're quite clever! We've covered a lot of game in these strips, but we're still far from the end. There are two more artifacts to recover - the mirror and the Dragon's Teeth - and who knows what devilish cunning is required to get these items! Once all three are in your possession you have the means to take down the evil spirits once and for all... as long as you have the brains and skill required!

Continuing our unrivalled coverage of what's hot and what's not in The Land of the Rising Sun, this month we investigate Capcom's latest 2D beat 'em up to hit the Saturn, Cyberbots. And as coin-op conversions go, they don't get much better than Cyberbots which bodes well for the future of Capcom releases. Marvel Super Heroes anyone?

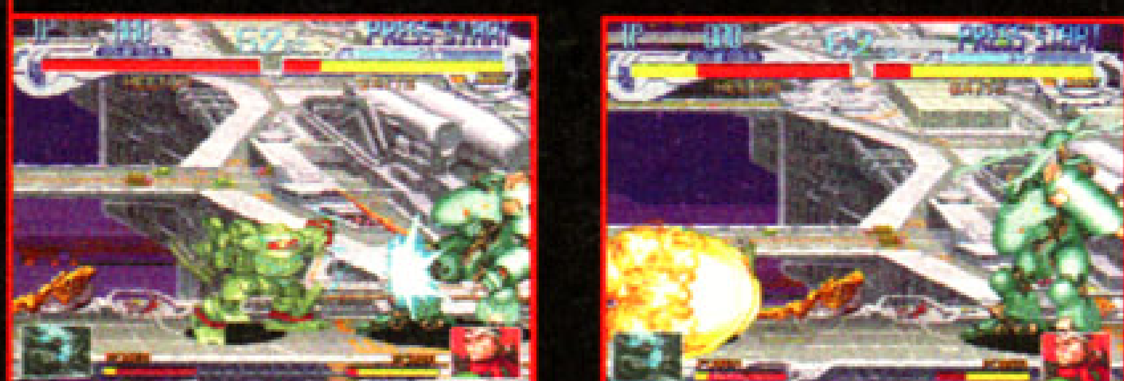
CYBERBOTS

BY	CAPCOM
STYLE	BEAT 'EM UP
ORIGIN	ARCADE CONVERSION
RELEASE	OUT NOW (JAPAN)


Awesome pyrotechnics are the order of the day in Cyberbots.

AND THERE'S MORE...

The Saturn version of Cyberbots features a couple of modifications over the arcade original, namely playable bosses and secret characters. The three mid-boss VAs are available from the start whereas the arcade version required the inputting of various codes before they are playable. That means Gaits, Super-8 and Helion are all playable from the beginning! Another improvement over the original is the availability of the three mid-boss pilots, Shade, Chiyomaru and Devilot de Deathsaturn whom were only used by the CPU in the arcade version. As far as secret characters go, Cyberbots features the mechanical version of Gouki (the Japanese version of Akuma) from the Street Fighter games known as Zero Gouki and is playable after fulfilling the various criteria.


Mid-level bosses Helion, Super-8 and Gaits in all their glory.



If there's one thing that you can say about Capcom, it's that they don't believe in rushing their games out into the shops, quite the contrary in fact. They appear to gleam sadistic pleasure from teasing us with what might be in the distant future. Take Marvel Super Heroes for example, confirmed for the Saturn over a year ago and yet we've seen nothing, though it finally made its debut appearance at the Tokyo Game Show this very month. X-Men: Children of the Atom took an eternity to reach these shores and no doubt so will X-Men vs Street Fighter. But what until then? What can 2D beat 'em up fans do to quench their irrepressible thirst for on-screen violence and mayhem? Why Cyberbots of course. Despite being overshadowed somewhat in the arcades by the aforementioned games, Cyberbots is Capcom's first 2D beat 'em up released this year on the Saturn. And the Japanese just can't get enough of it, so who are we to argue, eh?

WHAT'S THE STORY CYBER GLORY?

Obviously having the word "bot" in a game brings forth endless possibilities for cheap digs and snide comments. Suffice to say that here at SSM we pride ourselves on being able to rise above such tabloid journalism and sexual slurs. The game itself is set at the end of the 21st century, where a large proportion of the human race has settled on various space colonies. However in an attempt to gain independence from Earth, the various colonies have formed a military alliance using huge robots as their weapons. Like this month's other robot combat game MechWarrior 2, this means taking to your huge robot fighting machine and defeating the rebel VAs (Variant Armour) in a last-ditch attempt to save Earth.









HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Essentially Cyberbots is a rehash of the Street Fighter games featuring all the familiar elements that have made Capcom market leaders in the 2D beat 'em up field. What this means is that playing Cyberbots appears very familiar to Street Fighter veterans, especially as many of the moves are variations of the standard fireball attack.

However the controls differ to most Capcom beat 'em ups in that only four buttons are used as opposed to the usual six, effectively giving you two attack buttons, a weapon and a boost button. With a bit of manual finger dexterity all sorts of attacks and multiple hit combos are pulled off by using various combinations of these. Similar to Virtual On, when the boost button is used in conjunction with the D-pad dashes and prolonged flight are executed allowing you to fire your weapon from the vantage point. The weapons


Blodia unleashes a special attack as the buildings crumble.









Looking like a giant octopus, Super-8 is one of the instantly accessible mid-level boss VAs. And he's awesome!

If ever there was a game to showcase the Saturn's awesome 2D sprite-handling capabilities, then Cyberbots is it.

themselves differ depending on which VA you have chosen to occupy and range from spectacular bombs, to self-propelled missiles and even lightning. Neither the boost or the weapons however are used when the boost or weapon gauge is overheating, so it becomes a matter of conserving your resources.

Like Street Fighter, X-Men: COTA and countless others, Cyberbots has an Energy Gauge, which is charged with energy every time your hits connect or by pressing both attack buttons simultaneously, though this renders your VA vulnerable to an enemy onslaught. When the energy gauge is fully charged the body of your VA flashes indicating its increased attacking power. This allows competent players to unleash a Super Special attack on the enemy VA, which results in the screen flashing as the receiving VA has its metallic limbs scattered over a wide area. Speaking of limbs, each VA also has a special arm removing attack, which rips the arm off the enemy VA leaving them incapacitated and unable to perform many of their moves.

EXPAND YOUR RAM, MAN!

Despite all the data compression techniques employed by Capcom to fit all the information of the coin-op into the Saturn, clearly there was just too much data and so Cyberbots is the first of Capcom's arcade hits to use a RAM cartridge. This has allowed the programmers more memory to make sure the Saturn version is as close to the coin-op as possible. This is evident in the awesome graphics, as if ever there were a game to showcase the Saturn's 2D sprite-handling capabilities, Cyberbots is it. The highly detailed robots are huge, at least the size of the X-Men's Juggernaut and often fill most of the screen, so you'd be forgiven for thinking they control very sluggishly. But no, Capcom have outdone themselves this time as the robots shift about the screen at an incredible rate with super smooth animation. Coupled with the awesome pyrotechniques, albeit not to the standard of X-Men COTA but impressive nevertheless and what you have is a visually outstanding game. But then we'd expect nothing less from the guys at Capcom, would we?

UK RELEASE?

Despite having quite a large following around other parts of the globe, Cyberbots is a relatively unknown coin-op over here, which probably accounts for the fact that as of yet it hasn't been signed for a UK release. However judging by the amount of pesky phone calls I've received about this game, it would certainly seem as though the demand is there. It's ironic really when you consider the amount of crap that gets released without a second thought, but when a top notch Japanese game comes along its future in this country is uncertain. Fingers crossed that someone has the good sense to snap it up for release and give the public what they want.



Lightning certainly lives up to his name. What a shocker!

BACKGROUND DETAILS

The arcade version of Cyberbots featured highly detailed backgrounds which Capcom have managed to replicate almost perfectly with the use of the RAM cartridge for the home conversion. Take a look at the spectacular errupting volcanoes, the huge buildings crashing down around your ears or the enormous Independence Day-style space craft taking off on Guldin's stage. Cool!



The detail in the backgrounds is frankly astonishing.



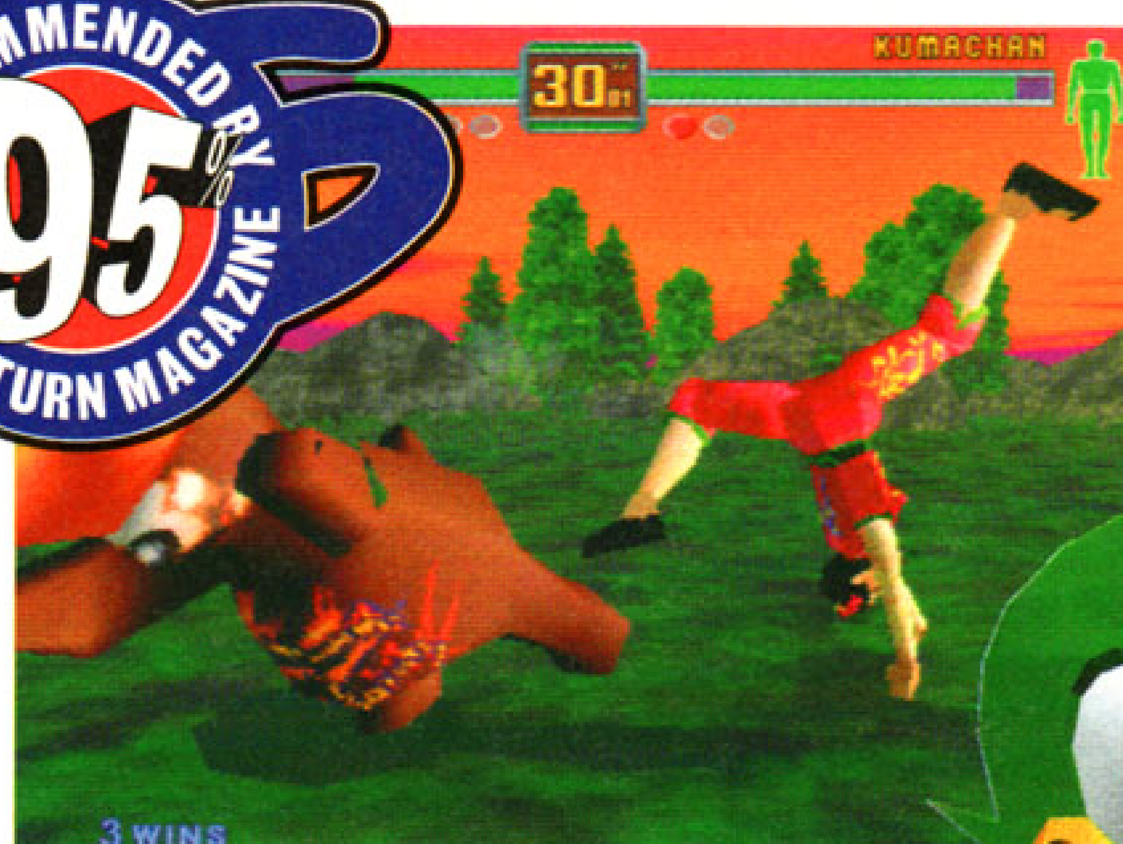


FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

Six months after the Japanese release, European Saturn owners finally get to appreciate the latest and some might say greatest 3D fighting game. Yes, Fighters MegaMix is finally here.

BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	BEAT 'EM UP
RELEASE	JUNE



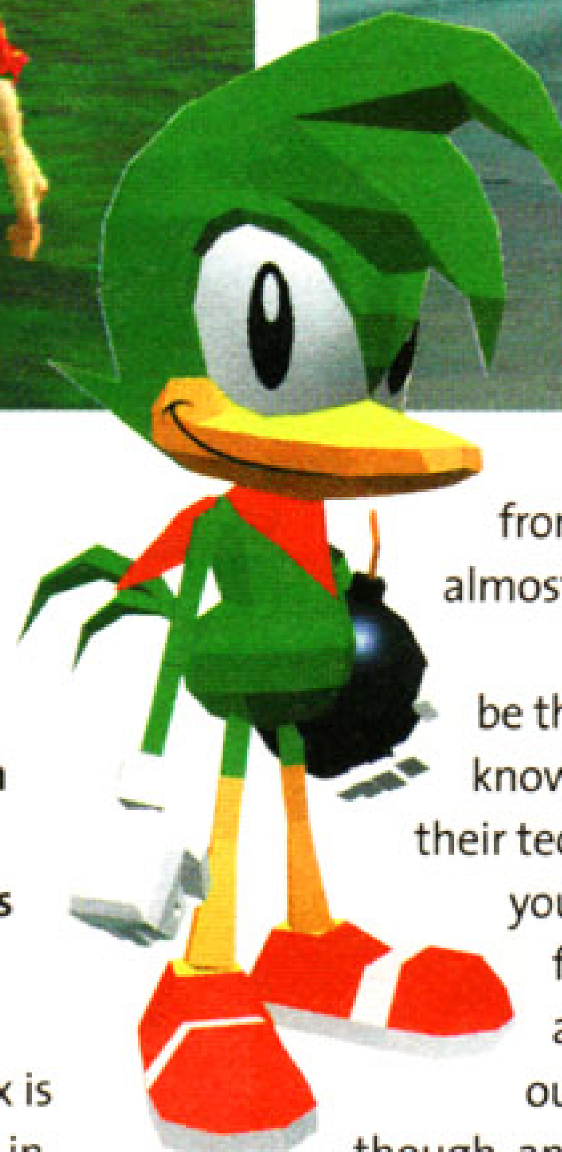




Akira demonstrates one of his awesome Virtua Fighter 3 moves!



Bahn is cool but the secret Ura Bahn is far more powerful!



On paper, this is quite clearly the best fighting game in the world ever. It has 32 characters. It has all of the Fighting Vipers and the Virtua Fighters in one big package. It has FV wall-based backgrounds AND Tekken-style surrounds too. It also happens to have ten secret characters to find as well.

The list of features in Fighters MegaMix is frankly amazing. The sheer amount of game in there is enough to make this a priority Saturn purchase and I'll quite happily say that the amount of fun you get from this game makes this particular title almost a steal at the price.

The centrepiece of Fighters MegaMix has to be the Virtua Fighters. As regular readers of SSM know, these characters have the vast majority of their techniques from arcade Virtua Fighter 3, giving you plenty of time to practise the moves for the forthcoming Saturn conversion or indeed the arcade original. AM2 have deliberately left out some techniques to keep VF3 fresh though, and most of the others have different effects in MegaMix. So yes, while most of the moves are there the fact is that MegaMix plays nothing like VF3.





Splash Mountain - a staple technique right from the original VF - is back in Fighters MegaMix!





Hageki Unshin Soukohou: Stun Palm of Doom!



Kage unleashes a Dragon Punch on Sanman!







Above: Fighting Viper Jane unleashes an awesome backbreaker on VF's Jacky Bryant! Top: Akira's power uppercut is deadly!





Fighters MegaMix combines Vipers and VF to awesome effect! A title with huge amounts of depth and super-playability awaits!

So what does it play like exactly? It's certainly a completely different experience to any of the Virtua Fighter series, despite the inclusion of the characters. I would also add that Virtua Fighter 2 should be in your CD collection alongside MegaMix because the two games play so differently.

Fighters MegaMix has far more in common with Fighting Vipers. The engine, although slightly refined, remains the same but the basic bare-bones of the gameplay remains the same too. Vipers could almost be considered a junior version of VF in that moves are a lot easier to produce, the pace is faster and the movement is a lot "looser", allowing more complicated combos to be produced with less effort. It's fair to say that players of less skill will get a lot more out of the VF characters in MegaMix than they will in VF2... or VF3 for that matter.

The bottom line is that because of the huge





amounts of similarity between Vipers and MegaMix, the latter game really does make buying the former a bad move.

The other question we've been hearing is, should I buy MegaMix if I own VF2? Well, as mentioned earlier, the games are worlds apart in graphics and execution. I have to admit that despite thinking MegaMix to be superior in my initial few weeks with the game, I now prefer Virtua Fighter 2 due to its more controlled system and superior hi-res graphics. What lastability Fighters MegaMix offers in terms of characters, VF2 matches with superior depth of gameplay with the lesser amount of fighters on offer.

But MegaMix really is awesome fun. The combination of myriad gaming styles by including the Vipers and the VFers in one game really is a unique proposition that simply MUST be experienced. The secret characters are really cool too - Janet Marshall's moves are a sub-set of Aoi's from VF3 (more good practise then) and the inclusion of the Sonic Fighters is probably the only time you'll ever be able to play these characters on the Saturn (since the main game isn't likely to appear now). And despite my comments earlier about VF pros bemoaning the loose controls, it actually allows for some truly incredible combinations.

Add in the Fighting Vipers/ Virtua Fighter rules option, the chance to pick one of 32 different backgrounds, and the vast amount of little secrets to discover and what you have is what can truly be described as a once-in-a-lifetime videogame, which I beseech you to go forth and purchase.

RICH LEADBETTER





Wacky camera angles end in these brilliant victory poses.



Shun's VF3 techniques make him even more unpredictable.

PAL CONVERSION: THE FACTS

Since we've had to wait so long for the PAL translation of Fighters MegaMix to turn up, you'd think that AM2 would have handed in a conversion that truly is of Virtua Fighter 2 calibre. Oddly, VF2 still rules supreme as the best PAL translation ever (even though AM2 had less time to do it) as PAL MegaMix does have a slight degree of speed-loss and slightly bigger borders. However, within minutes, we got used to the speed as it is and it really doesn't have that much of an impact at all. Compared to the slow motion Tekken translation of PlayStation, this translation is clearly light years ahead.

What we will say is that Sega Europe have done wonders in extending the longevity of the game. I completed the Japanese version on my first go, but newcomers will find the going a lot tougher in the PAL game. SImilarly the ten second round option has been removed - and rightly so. In the Japanese version you could just hit your foe and run away for the rest of the round. Perhaps the best news about the PAL translation is the elimination of the slowdown that plagued the Japanese version no end. Although it very, very occasionally rears its ugly head, it's far superior to what it was - and significantly better than Fighting Vipers. This added smoothness really adds to the professionalism of the game. So all in all, there are many benefits to owning the PAL game - it's cool!



Different enough to VF2 and indeed VF3 to warrant immediate purchase. The fact that it has huge depth and gargantuan levels of playability helps too. Put short, you must own this amazing game! I bought it myself and so should you!

graphics	94
sound	90
playability	95
lastability	95

overall 95%

KING OF FIGHTERS 95



Issue #6 of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE featured this game on the front cover. Now, in issue #20, we finally review it - yes, it's King of Fighters 95! But is it too little too late, or is KoF an everlasting classic?

BY	SNK
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	BEAT 'EM UP
RELEASE	JULY



SNK aren't afraid to be a bit unconventional with their fighters!

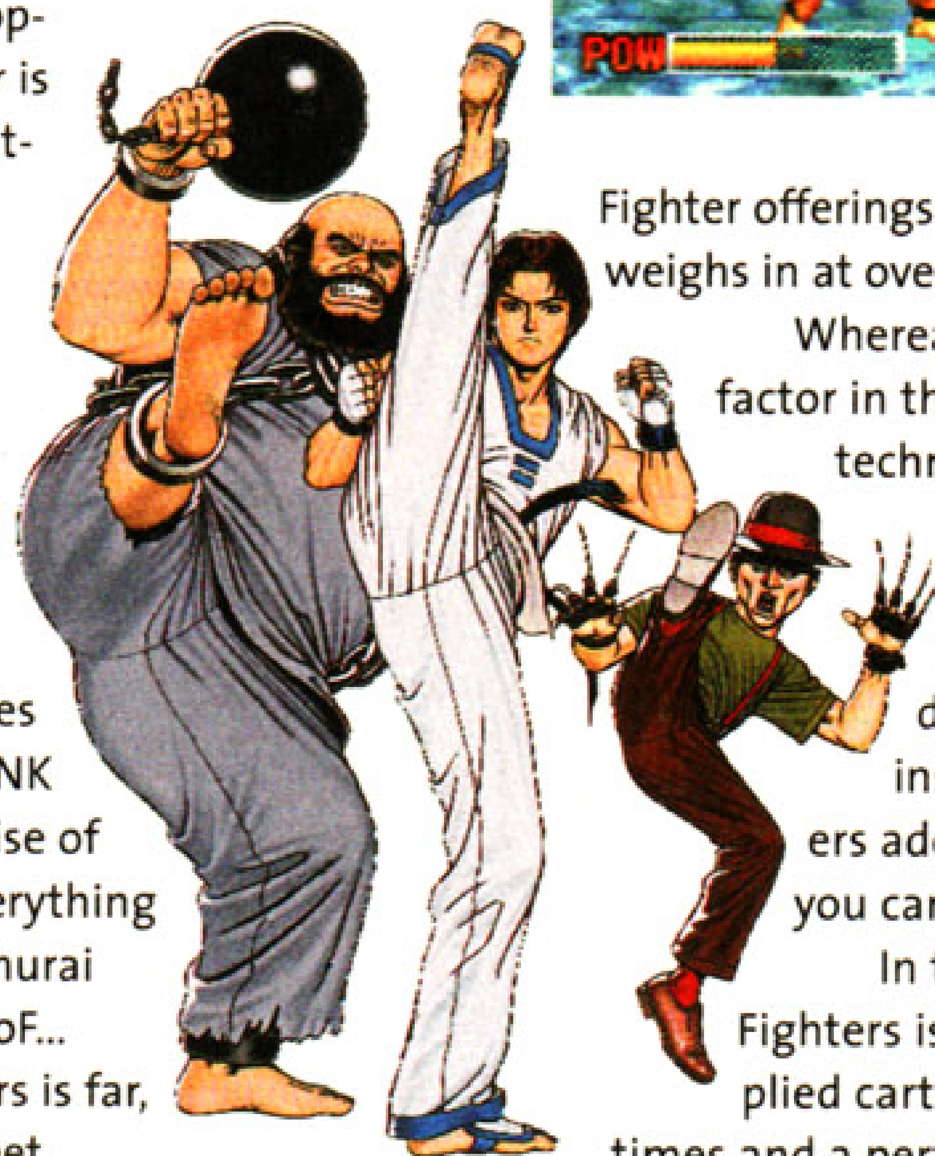


Aerial fireballs? Forget Akuma, SNK invented them (right).

In Japan, the King of Fighters series is one of the most revered series of videogames ever created. In 1994, KoF94 scooped Famitsu Tsushin's prestigious Game of the Year award (FT is the top-selling multiformat mag in Japan). In 1995, the sequel was runner-up. Both times, SNK successfully out-trumped every other fighting game, 2D or 3D. Now that's some achievement considering the likes of Virtua Fighter and Street Fighter Alpha were around at the time...

The thing is, the western world appears to have a bit of a chip on its shoulder about SNK titles, which explains their relatively low popularity. The truth of the matter is that although Capcom reinvented the fighting game genre with Street Fighter 2, it has been SNK that have been the real innovators. See those ace Super Combos in SF? SNK did it literally years earlier in their Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting franchises.

What King of Fighters does is bring together the various SNK fighting game series in the guise of one killer game. Just about everything from their other titles (bar Samurai Shodown) makes it way into KoF... and then some! King of Fighters is far, far deeper than any of the Street Fighter offerings - the official players guide in Japan weighs in at over 500 pages!



Whereas Capcom concentrate on the fun factor in their fighting games, SNK zero in on technique. Literally months of play await in King of Fighters as you discover new techniques and new strategies. The whole concept of doing away with rounds and instead using a team of three fighters adds to the skill immensely (although you can go one-on-one if you really want).

In terms of audio-visuals, King of Fighters is nigh-on arcade perfect. The supplied cartridge means super-low loading times and a perfect arcade look. Audio-wise,

IT'S THREE ON THREE!

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between King of Fighters and other beat 'em ups is the Team Select system. The characters in King of Fighters are split up into teams of three, with fights being one round elimination contests. In the 94 edition (which never made it to Saturn), you couldn't customise your teams. In 95 (and indeed 96) you can mix and match the multitude of characters as you wise, allowing for over 3,000 different variations of team!





The bouncy Mai in fiery action!















SNK's characters and backgrounds are just great.



Clark's at maximum power opening up his super move!

A game revered by true fighting fanatics King of Fighters has never been taken seriously by the average gamer...

things are awesome, despite the ridiculous comedy speech. The CD music remains some of the best available on Saturn.

Of course, King of Fighters' appeal rests on its playability and that's where the bone of contention lies. SNK fans swear blind that King of Fighters is far superior to Street Fighter Alpha (and its sequel) simply because the element of skill required is that much tougher - making the rewards that much sweeter. The majority of us are unlikely to reach that pinnacle of skill, 500 page players guides (which you can't get in the UK) or not.

King of Fighters 95 didn't receive many decent reviews on its import release, but the fact is that if you're good enough, it remains one of the greatest fighting games of all-time. As to whether the import 96 version is better, well this is one case where the sequel is actually a completely different game rather than just an enhanced version of the previous year's game (Electronic Arts take note), and both are incredible.

If it was a bit more user-friendly (like Street Fighter is), King of Fighters would be a classic the world over, but regardless, it's great to see a game of such distinction available on Saturn.

RICH LEADBETTER

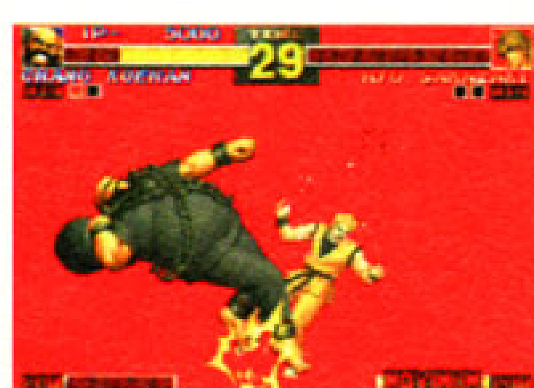




Chang smashes the Ryu-alike Ryo into touch.



Joe Higashi shows most ungentlemanly conduct in this particularly violent screenshot. Bye-bye knee-caps!





Chang's super finishes off Ryo (left). The Team Battle is a feature originally created in this game (right) and it's ace!

CARTING ABOUT

King of Fighters 95 is nigh-on arcade perfect, thanks to the supplied ROM cartridge, which doubles the amount of memory on-board the Saturn to a whopping four megabytes! This means tiny loading times and virtually no compromise from the arcade original. It's probably down to the age of the game, but the good news is that despite no price being announced at this time, it's virtually certain that King of Fighters 95 will retail at much the same price as other new games, despite the cart's inclusion.



A truly remarkable videogame... if you've got the skills to get the most out of it. If you haven't, stick with Street Fighter Alpha 2. If you have, you'll appreciate the true artistry SNK have put into this game.

graphics	91
sound	93
playability	92
lastability	91

overall 89%

PANDEMONIUM

Another second rate conversion of a PlayStation game on the Saturn? Is it chuff. Pandemonium is amongst the new breed of games showing just what the Saturn is capable of when competently programmed.

BY	CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	PLATFORM
RELEASE	MAY



TRANSPARENT TRICKERY

So the Saturn can't handle transparencies eh? Well, no. This is all set to change as Pandemonium features some impressive transparency effects, curling smoke clouds and transparent shields are in abundance and with news that Core's forthcoming Ninja has some of the most impressive effects ever seen on the Saturn, things are looking rosy indeed. Hoorah!









Check out these cool Saturn transparency effects!



Bottom bouncing aplenty here.



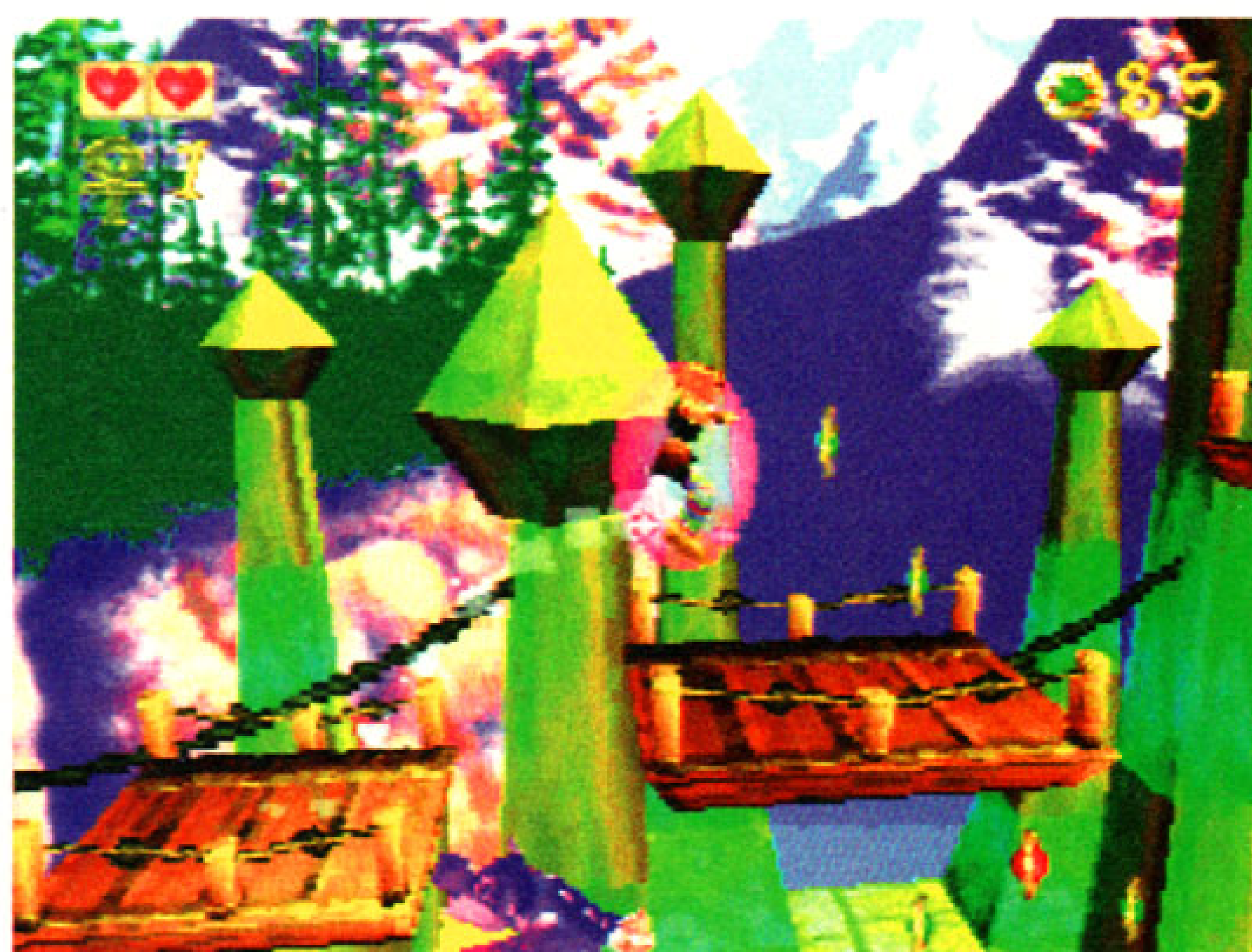
Nikki is naughty but nice.

Of the deluge of platform games to adorn the Saturn of late, none have shone sufficiently to be regarded as grade A Saturn titles. Not even the debut appearance of Sonic was good enough to attain a score in the nineties. Well that's all set to change with the imminent release of Pandemonium, a conversion of the critically acclaimed PlayStation platform game. So impressed were Sega with the conversion work being undertaken that they snapped up the rights to the game from BMG to release it themselves over here. But we're not ones to fall for all that hype, instead preferring to judge each game on its individual strengths and weaknesses.

From the moment you load up Pandemonium you know you're in for a treat as the cool FMV intro kicks in. Therein the storyline is explained with the two main characters, Fargus and Nikki, getting themselves in a spot of bother. Whilst casting spells, they accidentally summon up a huge monster with destruction and mayhem ensuing. Naturally, the only way to stop the monster is to finish the game. You can play as either of the two characters, whose abilities differ slightly in that Nikki can jump some way higher than Fargus who instead employs a spinning attack with which to defeat smaller enemies. Once selected the game begins proper.

The aim of Pandemonium is simple enough, progress almost constantly to the right of each level along the various platforms until you reach the exit. There are around twenty levels awaiting you with treasure littered along the way to collect. The

The graphics are the game's biggest selling point. The visuals are in glorious 3D with a bright colour pallete and look most spectacular indeed.



Pandemonium's clever mix of 3D visuals and 2D gameplay make it an essential Saturn purchase. If you're gagging for a decent platformer – here it is.



Fargus and Nikki are on an epic quest to save their home town from a mystical mass of monsters. Crikey!

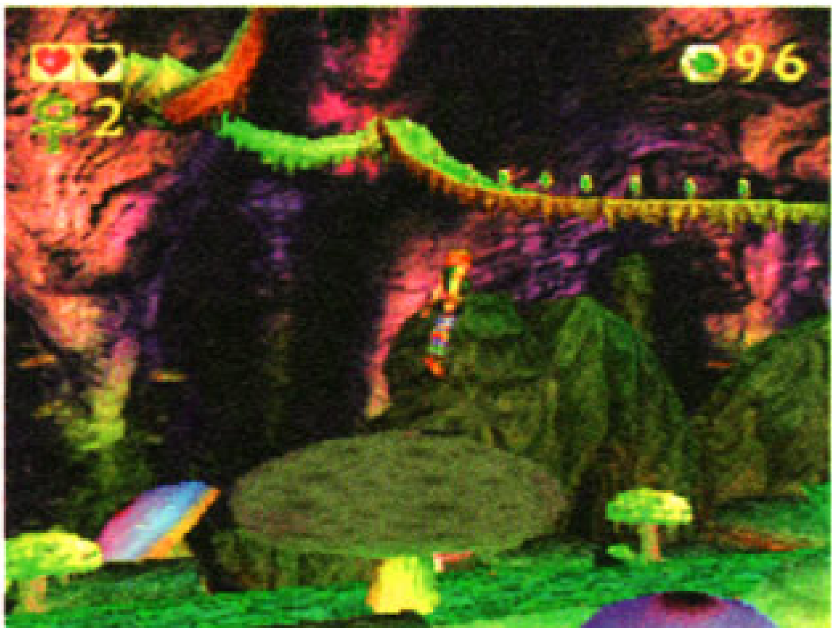
amount you retrieve is shown as a percentage score at the end of each level with the aim being to collect all 100% of the treasure. If only it that were that easy though, as all manner of bizarre polygon creatures inhabit each of the levels and attempt to thwart your progression as best they can. Like all good platformers these are destroyed by bouncing on their heads or if playing as Fargus by using his Sonic-style spin-dash attack. In addition, power-ups are collected which allow either of the two characters to fire beams which have the effect of shrinking or freezing enemies making progression through the level a tad simpler. Every so often you'll come across a huge boss character to defeat before progressing onto the later levels, such as the Shroom Lord whom, if given the opportunity fires, smaller mushroom projectiles at you. Admittedly this hardly sounds original, but then you'll find very little that is in Pandemonium. However, what Pandemonium does do well, is take all the classic elements of the billions of platformers before it and combines them to make a superb game.

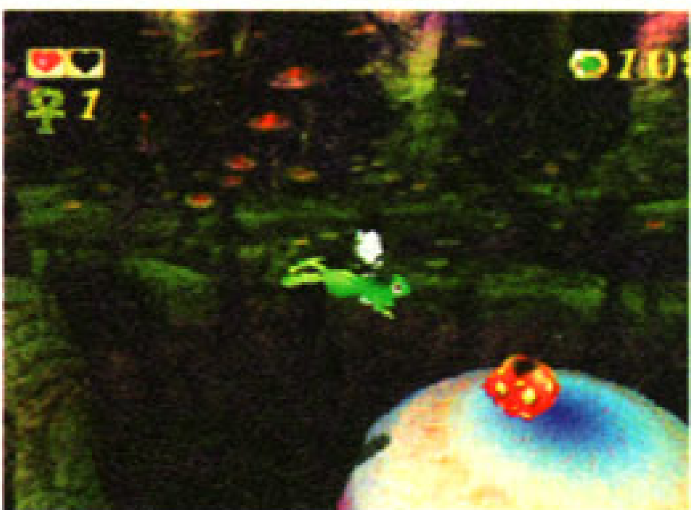
The graphics however, are possibly the game's biggest selling point. The visuals are in glorious 3D with a bright colour pallete and look most spectacular indeed. However, this proves somewhat misleading as Pandemonium is essentially a 2D platform game with the player only being able to move the character left or right through each level. Unfortunately, this linear style gives you a distinct lack of freedom when playing despite the multiple routes but this is one of Pandemonium's few shortcomings.

Each of the levels is magnificently designed and incredibly varied featuring some of the most spectacular camera angles courtesy of the "floating camera". Polygon glitching is also barely noticable. The bottom line is that Pandemonium is an excellent conversion of the PlayStation original that easily surpassed our previous expectations. The graphics are excellent, the gameplay is fast and varied and proves to be a most enjoyable package.

LEE NUTTER









Although Fargus may lack the character appeal of Sonic, he's still got some nifty moves such as his trademark cartwheel attack and Jester-headed magic wand.

DYNAMIC CAMERA

One of the most impressive things you'll notice whilst playing Pandemonium is the way the floating camera automatically zooms about, giving you the best possible panoramic view of the action. This is done in such a way as to give players just enough field of vision ahead to allow them to see and react to any approaching enemies, but not too much as to take away the element of surprise. Cor, aren't those Crystal Dynamics folks clever?



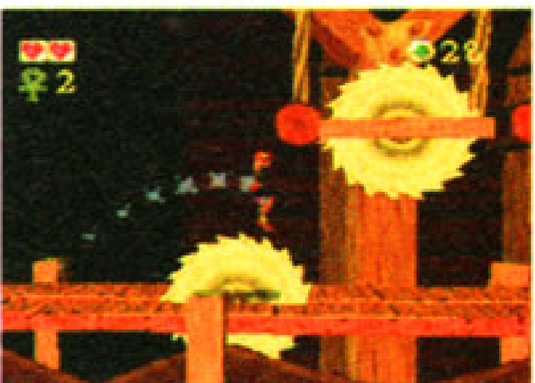






Use each character's special attacks to trounce enemies.





Despite being quite linear, Pandemonium excels in terms of graphics and gameplay and is by some way the best platformer on the Saturn.

graphics	91
sound	90
playability	90
lastability	89
overall	90%

MR BONES

If you've read this issue in any kind of order, you'll no doubt have read the Pandemonium review by now and have seen that it pretty much has the platform genre sewn up. Enter Mr Bones as a late contender for the crown.

BY	SEGASOFT
PRICE	£29.99
STYLE	PLATFORM
RELEASE	OUT NOW



Rescue the little people from the clutches of the evil spiders.

PRE-RENDERED GRAPHICS

Much of the graphics in Mr Bones are pre-rendered which are blended in with the sprites in the foreground to make some of the levels appear quite stunning. The huge skeletal remains of the dinosaur guardian in the dry mote level are particularly impressive.








One of the many FMV sequences in the game.

We should always be dubious of games that take so long to come to fruition, as it is very rare that it is because the programmers are striving to make the game better. Case in point: Spot Goes To Hollywood and Scorcher. Like Segasoft's Mr Bones they were announced for the Saturn right at the very beginning and all three looked mightily impressive. But that was then and this is now. Inevitably as programmers become more familiar with the Saturn, new doors are opened which allows for bigger and better games making the older ones look a tad dated. But we're prepared to give Mr Bones a fair crack of the whip and cast aside all preconceived notions and misguided aspersions we may have previously been harbouring.

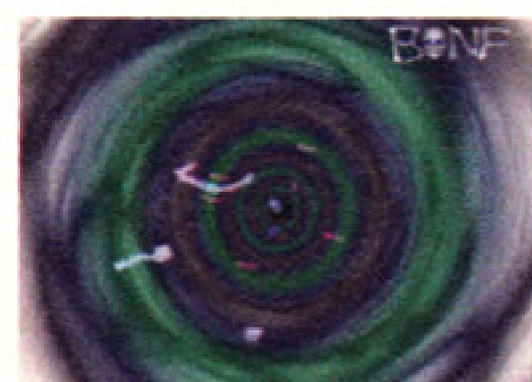
It certainly appears as if a lot of effort went into making Mr Bones, God knows they had enough time. Each and every one of the twenty something levels are different from the last, combining totally different styles of gameplay into one massive game. I say massive because it comes on two CDs, due in no small part to the huge amount of FMV sequences that have been packed into it. Yep, those crazy Americans really love their story telling FMV sequences. The game begins with the frankly appalling graveyard chase level which is off-putting to say the least and doesn't bode well for the rest of the game. Playing as Mr Bones, you are chased through a hazardous graveyard by a bunch of marauding skeletons leaping over grave stones and avoiding ditches. After that the levels get more and more bizarre as you stagger through them attempting to keep your limbs together. You see, being a skeleton your body is vulnerable to enemy attack which sheds various parts of your skeletal anatomy. Luckily Mr Bones can reform himself back to his original state to allow you to continue through the game.

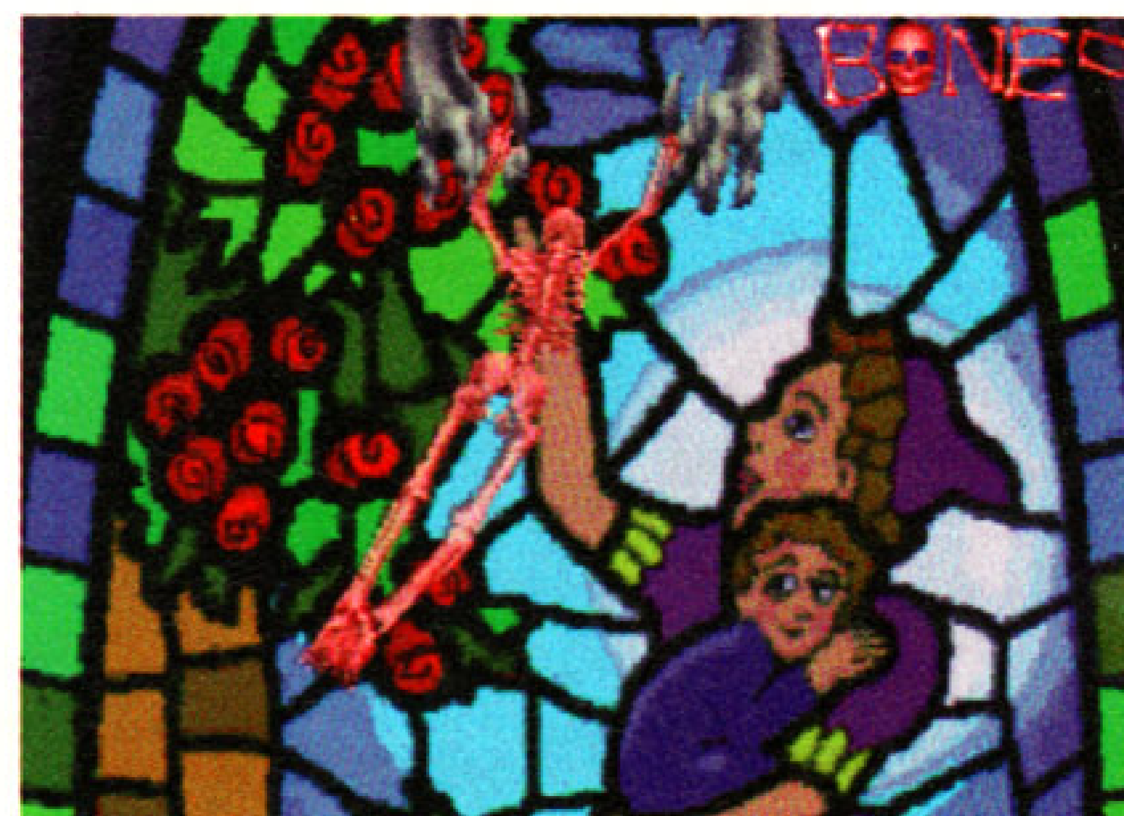
As I've already mentioned, each of the twenty-something levels are completely different from the last and some are genuinely original. Whether it's belting




Bereft of limbs, another FMV bit indicates your untimely death.




Collect the power-ups in this Tempest 2000-style stage.

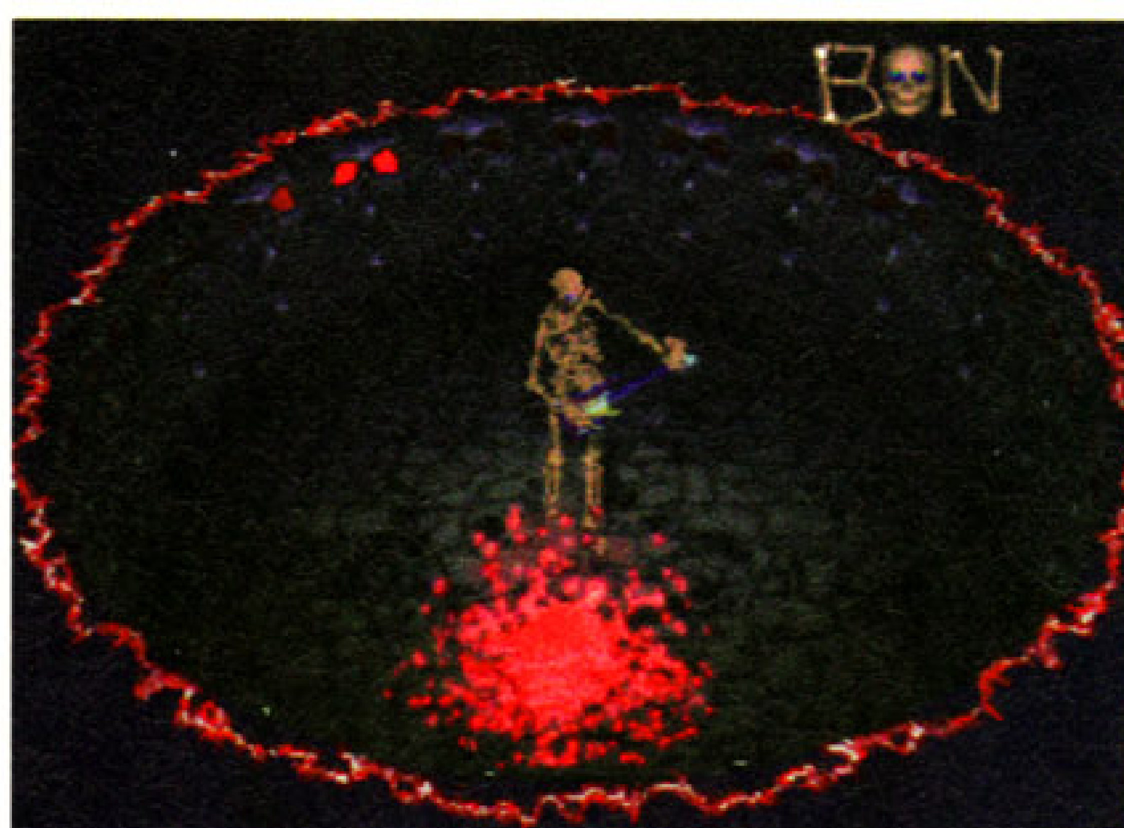


Collision with the stained glass window is imminent, methinks.









BONE JOVI

One of the more bizarre levels of Mr Bones requires our platform hero to blast out some nifty rock 'n' roll riffs in time to the background rhythm guitar through a series of joypad button presses. If the vast and hostile audience of skeletons like what they hear, their eyes will glow blue and they wave their lighters in the air. Once you've won them over, it's on to the next level. Cool dude!

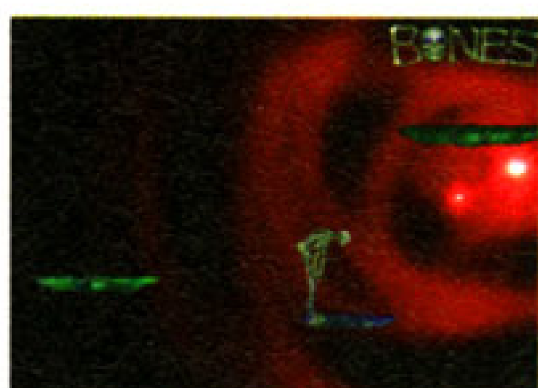


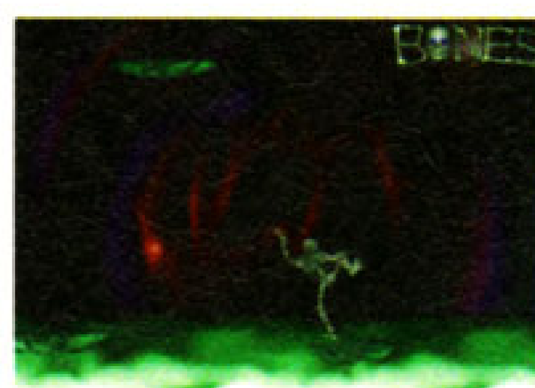
The bottom line is that Segasoft's Mr Bones is yet another classic example of a Saturn game that offers too little, too late

out guitar riffs to an audience of skeletons, or swimming through the Tomb Raider-esque underground caverns, smashing through pane glass windows or even telling jokes by making random button presses. "Why did the cow cross the road? To get to the udder side!" And so forth. You get the general idea of the kind of sad American sitcom sense of humour we're talking about here. With the exception of the jokes though, originality and variety is one thing Mr Bones isn't short of, the problem being however that each of the levels plays like a bonus level from a platform game rather than the game itself. The differing game concepts just don't fit together properly even with the massive FMV sequences which attempt to hold the thing together. Sure the same idea of having different gameplay styles in one game worked with Die Hard Trilogy, but to my mind that is the only such example. Mr Bones comes across as a bit of a mismatch. Half the time you're not aware of what is required to successfully complete the level until it's too late, which is frustrating to say the least.

Graphically, it's pretty hit and miss with Mr Bones. There's no denying that some of the pre-rendered levels look quite stunning with the overlaid sprites blending quite well. Just check out the huge dinosaur creature guarding the dry mote and you'll see what I mean. Other levels however, such as the very first graveyard level are extremely poor looking distinctly 16-bit in their appearance.

The most obvious downside to Mr Bones however, is that it was made with an American audience in





One of the few traditional 2D platform levels in the game.

mind. That means the standard soft-rock guitar soundtrack, cheesy FMV sequences, terrible voice overs by struggling actors and a sense of humour that makes Cannon and Ball look like comic geniuses.

The bottom line is that Mr Bones is another classic example of too little, too late. Who knows, a year or two ago this may have gone done quite well. There's certainly a lot of variety in there and I can even see younger children enjoying this, if the idea of a decomposed skeleton game doesn't appear too macabre for parents. But essentially we demand so much more from our games these days than a series of short bonus game-like levels strung together by endless amounts of cheesy FMV sequences. Hopefully Segasoft will put this one behind them and concentrate their efforts on bringing us some decent software. By the way, if you read the American import mags you're probably aware that they love this game over there. But bear in mind these are the same people who gave Blazing Dragons a very high mark, so treat their opinions with the contempt they deserve.

LEE NUTTER





The typically annoying American sense of 'humour' rears its ugly head in Mr Bones in the joke telling level.

A shambling mismatch of a game that has plenty of variety in the levels, but very little else to offer. Best avoided.

graphics	70
sound	60
playability	65
lastability	64

overall **66%**

MECHWARRIOR 2

From Pentium PC to Sega Saturn, the MechWarrior series successfully strides from system to system. But is Activision's armoured avenger really the titanium-plated tyrant it's made out to be?

BY	ACTIVISION
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	STRATEGY SHOOT'EM UP
RELEASE	OUT NOW

TECHNOLOGICAL TERRORS

31st century combat is explosive to say the least, as opposing Clans face off against each other, piloting armoured BattleMechs. These lumbering machines represent the cutting edge of military hardware and as such pack state-of-the-art firepower. There are a total of twelve accessible Mech's to choose from ranging from the hit-and-run capabilities of the Firemoth to the slow, yet powerful Warhawk. Selecting the right machine for the right mission is essential. Success is imperative, the Clans will not tolerate failure!



While Krazy Ivan may have failed to impress those Saturn owners expecting an action-packed, clash of the titans-style shoot 'em up, Activision's latest PC-to-console offering more than makes up for Psygnosis' paltry effort. For those of you not familiar with the FASA created futuristic world of BattleTech, MechWarrior 2 offers players the opportunity to pilot a towering mobile assault suit and take on similarly adorned forces from opposing Clans. Sticking closely to the RPG game of the same name, the MechWarrior series has evolved from its humble beginnings as a turn-based combat simulation - with players employing metal figures, multi-ple-sided dice and encyclopedia-length rule books - to a highly praised multi-player PC game. With the Saturn version of the game, developer Digital Domain have produced a supremely satisfying strategy shoot 'em up guaranteed to tax both your military mind and your itchy trigger finger.

By producing a customised Saturn game, Activision have essentially taken the very best missions and Mechs from the original PC version, ensuring that players face a real variety of campaigns and opponents in their quest to claim the galaxy. You see, in the explosive world of MechWarrior 2, warring Clans battle for supremacy by engaging each other in violent, high-tech combat. However, the ground-based battles of old have long since been superseded, with both sides now employing BattleMechs - essentially walking, multi-ton mechanoids piloted by brave warriors. After signing on as a potential Mech pilot, players may opt to fight for either the Wolf Clan or Jade Falcon Clan, two opposing factions bent on each others destruction. Selecting a Clan requires players to undertake one of two campaigns: Trial of Refusal (16 missions) or a further eight mini-missions - created exclusively for the Saturn game - which are only to be attempted by experienced pilots. Before plunging headlong into the smoke and destruction of battle though, warriors must first choose a Mech for their next mission





Digital Domain have produced a supremely satisfying strategy shoot 'em up guaranteed to tax both your military mind and your itchy trigger finger.



A wide range of game options allow players to tackle up to 48 challenging campaigns and even test out a training mode.



MechWarrior's smooth visuals stomp all over the PS version!



Failure results in fiery Mech destruction.





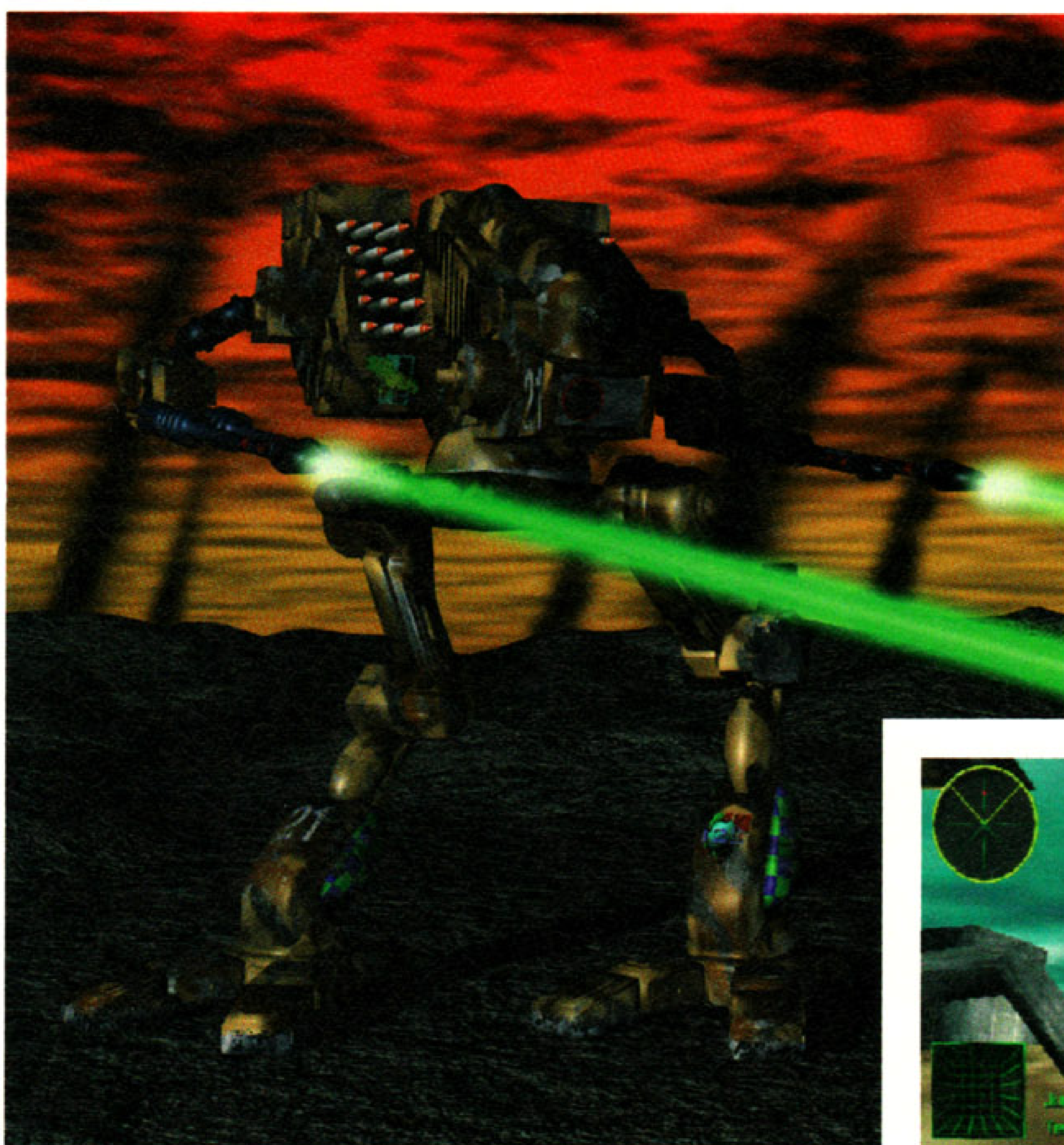
Each Clan boasts its very own intro sequence.



Are you a hotshot MechWarrior pilot?



Your training culminates with a trial mission against an experienced warrior.





Unleash a barrage of missiles against foes.



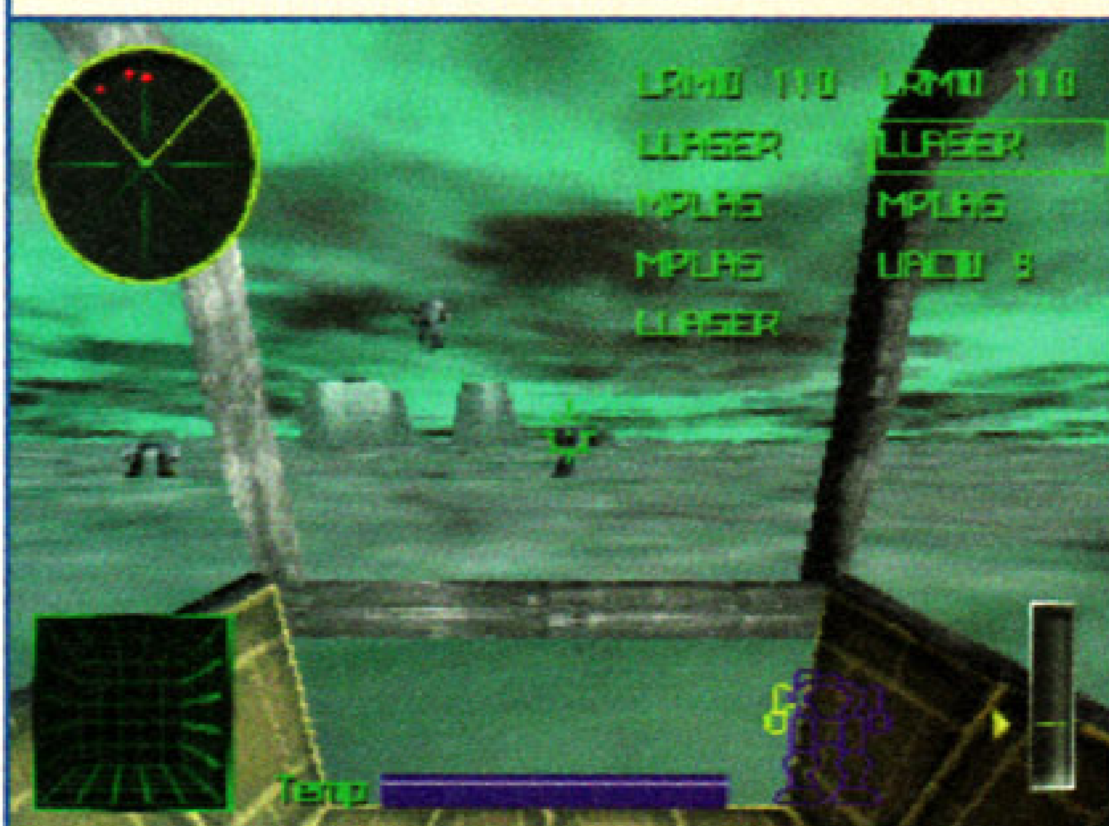
Follow the blue arrow to reach objectives.



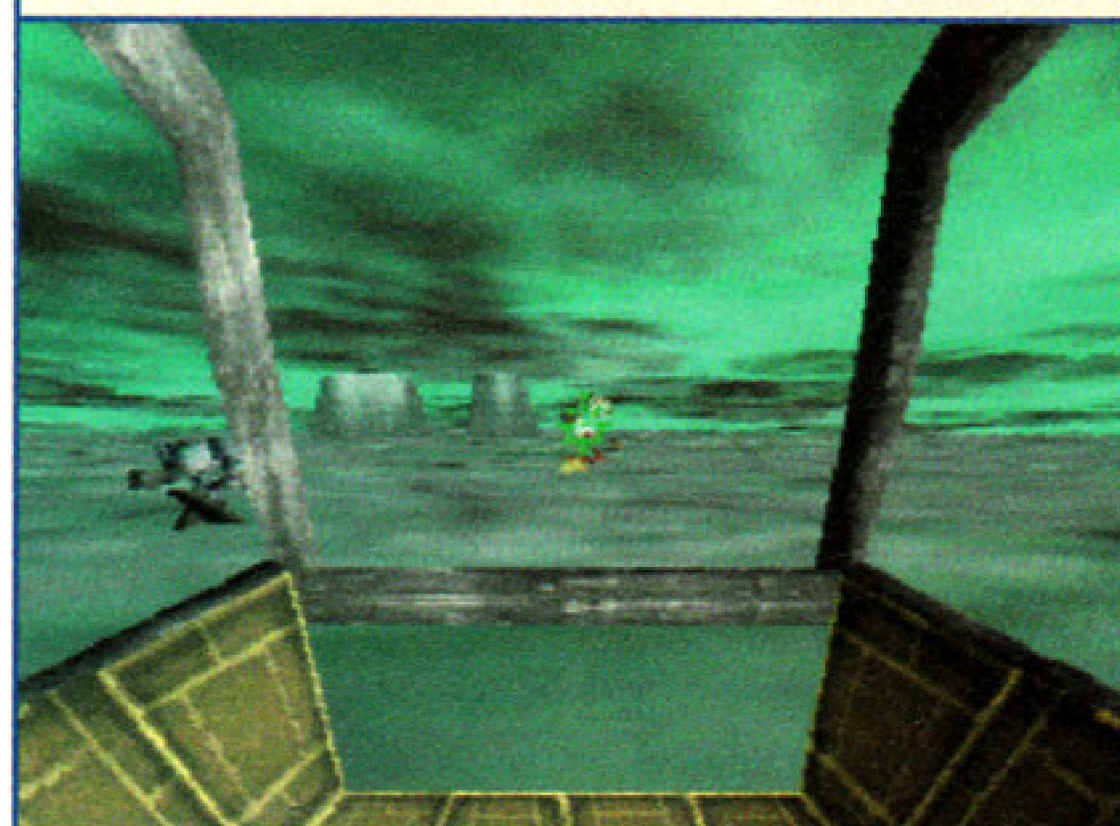


RUST IN PIECE!

While each Mech is certainly a formidable foe, these mechanical marvels are still prone to malfunctions. For combat pilots, keeping their machines in optimum condition is paramount. Sustained firing of any weapon will overheat the device causing it to shutdown momentarily. With primary weapons off line, warriors are often required to switch to secondary systems while their true destructive capabilities recharge. While recharging, Mechs are vulnerable to enemy attacks which can disable the machine's systems further, resulting in a lack of movement and their untimely destruction.



Below: Overheated Mechs will suffer total system shutdown.



As a skilful one player adventure, MechWarrior 2 stands head and shoulders above its peers. An essential purchase.

from an initially limited selection. Completion of each campaign, and progression through the Clan's ranks, provides access to faster, fiercer Mechs such as the Dire Wolf and Warhawk.

Each mission requires warriors to complete a set number of objectives, detailed in the pre-mission briefing, and survive the encounter in one piece. Campaigns range from providing covering fire for civilian convoys to all-out assaults on enemy territory. While these tasks may sound straightforward enough, cocky pilots will soon learn that some degree of skill is essential in order to avoid an early battlefield grave. Fortunately, MechWarrior 2's handy Training mode provides novice players with a crash course in Mech handling, weapons usage, basic hunting and even a trial-by-fire initiation test in order to get your skills up to speed.

The Mechs themselves are armed with a variety of offensive and defensive weapons including Pulse Lasers, Autocannons and Missile Launchers all of which may be combined and fired simultaneously. Furthermore, certain Mechs are also equipped with jump jets enabling airborne assaults to be undertaken. While the sheer wealth of options and multiple armoured craft on display are impressive enough, MechWarrior's intuitive control system makes the game a joy to play. While the PC employed a sometimes clumsy mouse/keyboard set-up, the Saturn's perfectly designed joypads easily handle the game's many vital control functions. When campaigns become complicated and lightning-like reflexes are required, it's comforting to know that your retreat and/or advance won't be hampered by a misplaced trigger button. Likewise, those critics of the Saturn's technical capabilities will be silenced once they see MechWarrior 2 in motion. Smooth scrolling backgrounds, gloomy alien landscapes and minimal pop-up combine to make this a thoroughly enjoyable yet incredibly testing 3D shoot 'em up. Fans of the original PC game will find little to gripe about here, the game's much-heralded strategy elements having been retained, while Saturn owners will gain yet another challenging title that, unlike many recent releases, won't be completed in just a few hours.

Sadly, MechWarrior's biggest downfall has to be its lack of multi-player options. There's no split-screen two player versus mode, link cable option or even a Netlink offering. While it's acceptable for Activision to claim that a lack of development time has meant that the game's multi-player options have fallen by the wayside there's no denying that this addition would have ensured MechWarrior 2's winning status. As it stands, Saturn owners have been robbed of yet another potential multi-player masterpiece but as a skilful one player adventure, MechWarrior 2 stands head and shoulders above its peers.

MATT YEO



Careful aiming of weapons is required to hit distanced targets.

A challenging 3D shoot 'em up successfully bringing the PC game to the Saturn, but it is let down by a lack of multi-player options.

graphics	88
sound	83
playability	90
lastability	91
overall	89%

SCORCHER

Piloting an anti-gravity forcefield bike through deserted post-apocalyptic urban wasteland type of games are an area largely overlooked on the Saturn with the notable exception of WipEout. Until now that is.

BY	SCAVENGER
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	RACING
RELEASE	JUNE

GREASED LIGHTNING

Graphically speaking, Scorcher, more so than most other games, demonstrates what the Saturn is capable of. Processing more polygons at a higher resolution than just about any game you can think of and running at 30 frames per second it really is the dog's bollocks. One of the best graphical touches though are the amazing lighting effects which feature throughout the game and look stunning.







For those people who haven't picked up a video games magazine in the last few years, Scorcher is a futuristic racer from those people at Scavenger, though by the time it finally gets released it could well be a present day racer. Why? Well Scorcher has been kicking around in one form or another for years now and was originally planned for the ill-fated 32X. Coded by Danish programmers Zyrinx (the people responsible for the Megadrive hit Sub-Terrania and the sequel Red Zone) they produced some jaw-dropping demos, but alas nothing came of it. A format change later and early demos of a game called Vertigo on the Saturn emerged and wowed crowds with some awesome hi-res super-smooth visuals. So impressed were Sega that they sent out pre-released copies to encourage US developers to produce games for their system. Then Scavenger disappeared and reappeared at random over the next couple of years showing off their newly titled Scorcher which has seemed near to completion for the last year or so. Months ago we ran a preview on it believing it to be just about ready and waited and waited. What seems like an eternity later we finally have a reviewable copy, but after literally years of hype could Scorcher possibly live up to expectations?

There's no denying that Scorcher is visually one of the most impressive games to appear on the Saturn. Running at 30 frames per second, with light-sourcing and clever clip-masking hiding any ugly pop-up, it's hard to find fault with the graphics. Visually it's at least on a par with Rally, maybe even surpassing it. But unfortunately for Scavenger graphics alone do not make a good game and this is where Scorcher's shortcomings are revealed.

The game itself is a racing game where you pilot an anti-gravity bike of some sort through six different post-apocalyptic tracks against three other opponents. There are three different racing modes; Championship, where you have to win each race to progress to the next track; Time Attack, which is just

Scorcher is visually one of the most impressive games to appear on the Saturn, running at 30 fps, with light-sourcing and clever clip-masking



Knowledge of the highway code is essential for success.



Another pant-wetting, racing through tunnel type scenario.





Though smashing through temporary road barriers may look rather nice, it has the undesirable effect of slowing your craft down.







Such is the excellence of the graphics engine, that taking a bad screenshot is simply impossible.



Your spherical craft tends to ricochet around the track making Scorcher more like a game of marbles than a racing game.



A tedious section of track full of obstacles.







POWER-UPS

Although your craft moves at a fair rate it becomes necessary to collect speed boosts in a similar vein to WipEout if you want to win any races. There are two different kinds of these, the glowing prisms which once collected boost your speed (when you activate the boost button) and the green pads which (once you run over them) extend down the road boosting your speed if you follow their path.





Scorcher is a game that I've been looking forward to for years and will go down in video games history as one of the biggest missed opportunities ever.

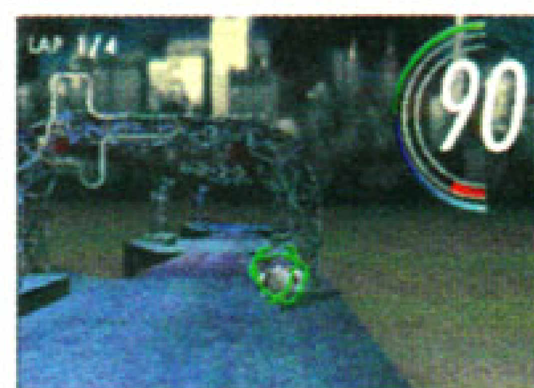
you against the clock; and Practice Mode. The latter two options however are only accessible after successful completion of the Championship mode. Parallels can be drawn with WipEout in that power-ups can be collected which boost your speed considerably until you collide with an opponent or obstacle to slow you down again. There are two different kinds of these, the glowing green prisms which must be smashed through, and with the use of the boost button increases your speed. The other is a green pad on the road which, when you run over it, extends down the road and following its path boosts your speed.

What makes Scorcher different from other racers is that the racing often takes place on multiple platforms, hence the inclusion of a jump button which allows you to switch from one level to the next. Various obstacles also litter your path including holes in the road which must be avoided and barriers which you can smash through.The music featured throughout the game is pretty good too in a thumping techno kind of way and fits quite well with the frantic nature of the gameplay.

However what could well have been an excellent racer is let down badly by several aspects of the game. To draw comparisons with Rally, what made it such an undoubtedly great game was the large range of options, the clever and varied track design and the amazing amount of control you had over your car. None of the aforementioned attributes can be seen in Scorcher. The options are very limited with only three racing modes, no two player, no vehicles to choose from, the one you get isn't customisable, you can't change the number of laps or even have manual gears. The track design is terrible, whoever thought of combining a platform game with a driving game should be shot. It simply doesn't work. The inclusion of obstacles and holes in the road only serves to slow the action down. The six tracks are also remarkably similar and indistinguishable from one another and have a dull grey kind of appearance, though I presume that's what a post-apocalyptic world looks like. The amount of control you exhibit over your vehicle is negligible with your vehicle ricocheting all over the place. The clipping is okay as most of it is cleverly hidden but some is still apparent as is glitching here and there. Not only that but there is an abundance of slowdown which detracts from the gameplay immensely and happens even when you're alone on the screen. Which leads on to possibly the biggest gripe I have with Scorcher, you're alone for most of the race as there are only three other competitors, which makes racing boring to say the least.

Scorcher is a game I've been looking forward to for years but will go down in video games history as one of the biggest missed opportunities ever. The graphics engine is obviously excellent, it's just a shame that not much thought went into the gameplay. Maybe Scavenger should have done this on the PlayStation instead where graphics over gameplay win every time and sell by the bucket load. Those of us who want a racer that's good to play should avoid this and get hold of Manx TT now.

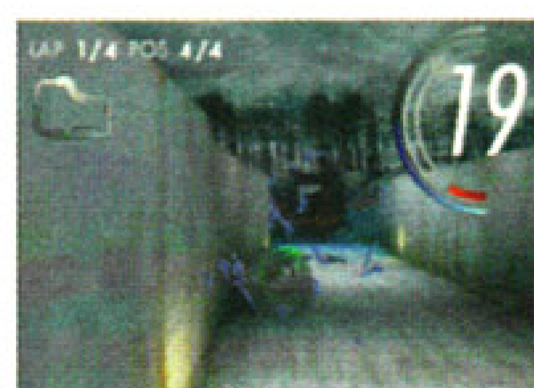
LEE NUTTER



Impressive backgrounds eh?



Post-apocalyptic racing fun.



Another grey stretch of road.



Excellent lighting effects.

A graphically excellent racing title where the gameplay appears to have been more of an afterthought than an integral part of the game.

graphics	93
sound	90
playability	65
lastability	69
overall	70%

SHINING THE HOLY ARK

When it comes to deep, involving role-playing games, you can't really get much better than the Saturn - now playing host to the latest in the great "Shining" series of role-playing games!

BY	SEGA/TEAM SONIC
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	JUNE





The caves and the forest are both early on in the game - turn to the showcase to see the game's later brilliant areas!





I hate RPGs, I really do. It's not down to the games themselves, it's what happens to my so-called life as a result of playing one... in that it seems to disappear entirely. It happened with Climax's brilliant Dark Savior and it has happened again with Team Sonic's latest RPG epic, Shining the Holy Ark. As soon as I start playing, I can't stop. Hours fly by when I'm supposed to be editing the magazine, travelling home, eating dinner and going to bed. But no, I'm still playing Shining the Holy Ark. So that's why I hate RPGs - the genre captivates me and keeps me super-glued to the console to the detriment of everything else.

There is certainly a huge amount of stuff to explore and enjoy in Shining the Holy Ark. The good thing is that Team Sonic have taken the best bits of Shining Wisdom and innovated everything else to create an even better experience. So it's goodbye 2D, hello textured polygon 3D! The graphics have been given a severe facelift, with everything now being a mixture of polygons and sprites.

It has to be said that the main "meat and drink" of the game, the areas you really need to explore - these aren't really that good looking. A tunnel is a tunnel is a tunnel, after all, and that's where you spend your first hour of the game. It's not exactly the most promising of starts, but things soon pick up.

Where the graphics really do look superb is in the villages that connect the various levels. All of the plot progression takes place here and it's here that you meet the majority of the game's cast. Luckily these aspects of the game are really well represented thanks to the brilliance of the character design and their surroundings. It's a bit of a shame that the actual levels look so much more dull, but the simple fact of the matter is that those latter sections offer huge amounts of exploration potential, and something has to suffer.

LET THE FIGHTING BEGIN!

The key to making your character stronger and more powerful is through the acquisition of experience points, which you get by vanquishing the meanies that populate the various levels. Combat is a turns based system - each character lashes out once per round, followed by the appropriate response from the meanies. Literally, the party left standing at the end is the winner. After that you can pinch all their money and belongings!

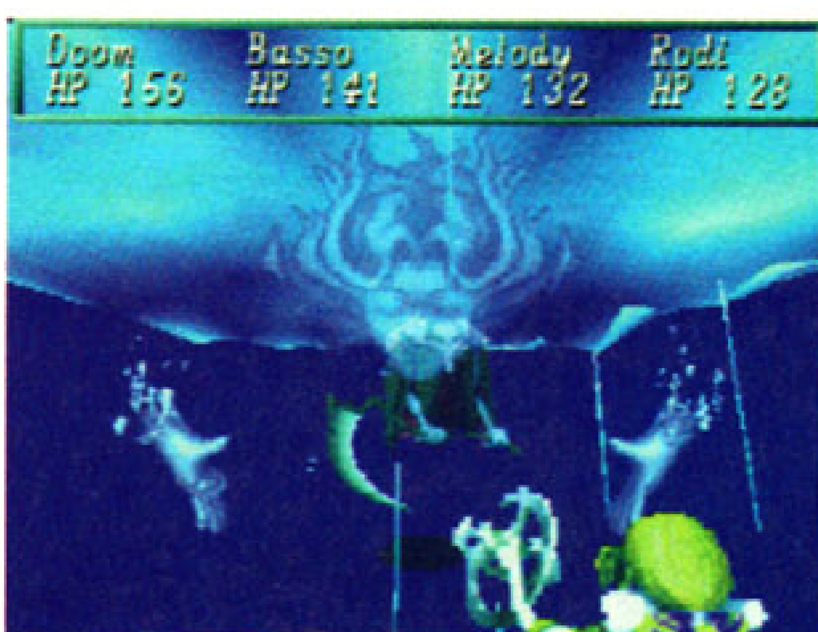


These bats come in ordinary and vampire varieties. These ultrasonic attacks can paralyse your party!





Visiting Church is essential in this game!



The second level elemental spell in action!



Basso the Dragon Warrior (right) joins your party later. To begin with, he's your foe!





As is the case with all Saturn RPGs it would seem, Shining the Holy Ark has an ace rendered intro.

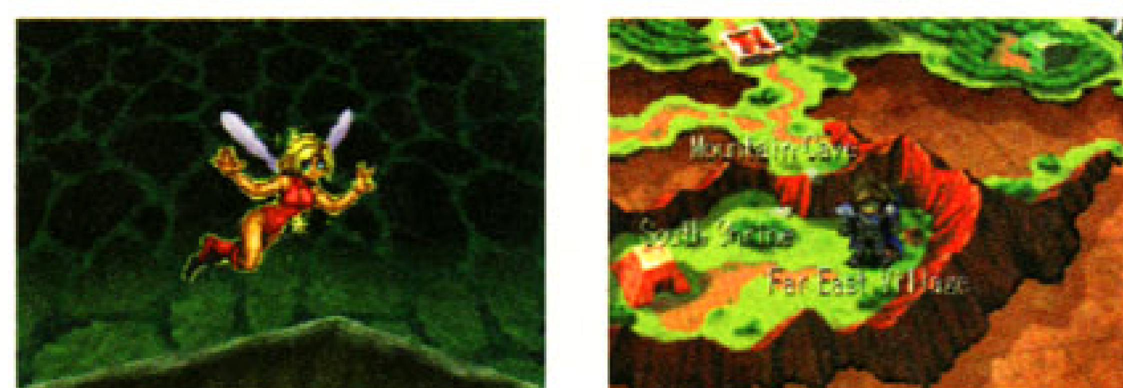


These spirits crop up at the game's beginning and give you virtual immortality, so dying in battle isn't really a problem.





Check out the pubs in order to gain extra information!







Trust us - RPG it may be, but this is also just BRILLIANT!

EQUIP YOUR TROOPS

As well as gaining more experience points, you can improve your characters' fighting effectiveness by kitting them out with better weapons and superior armour. You find this dotted around the levels, but really you need to spend the gold coins you get from the defeated meanies in the various villages between the levels on new wares. Your fighting power is also increased with better magic spells, and these are learned automatically upon gaining new levels of power.



The greatest Shining adventure yet is utterly amazing! A vast game of intrigue and tactical cunning awaits you! Don't miss it!

In these levels, gameplay is split into three distinct sections. There is the walking (or running) about, examining the location to find hidden treasure, or taking on the monsters that jump out to accost you. As is the RPG tradition, taking out the meanies gives you gold and experience points that you use to gain levels and purchase better equipment. It's also something of a "Shining" tradition that you can't really turn a corner without indulging in some form of combat. This is easily the most repetitive area of the game, but the fact is that it comes with the territory - Shining Wisdom was the same. Luckily Shining the Holy Ark manages to keep things interesting with a wealth of different adversaries, each with different capabilities that make each confrontation a different tactical challenge. As you would imagine, there are a huge array of magical spells and different weapons to look out for too. Yes it might seem to get a bit repetitive, but the combat system is key to the entire game. As well as the game system, RPGs thrive on having a decent storyline to follow. Now having played this with Japanese text for the last few months, I can honestly say that understanding exactly what's going on really makes a difference. The premise is certainly cool: your band of mercenaries are originally hired to track down an outlaw hiding in an underground network. However, a cave-in causes your prey to suddenly develop amnesia! That being the case he decides to team up with you lot to find out who he is and what he's doing, as well as help you to locate a missing team member who was possessed by an evil spirit as he lay unconscious after the cave-in. Got that? Good. Well obviously things get a bit more complicated as the game progresses. Over 16 hours of my last weekend were spent on this one game (see the showcase to see the extent of my travels).

The bottom line is that Shining the Holy Ark is the best RPG I've played in ages. The combination of gripping story, huge exploration potential plus excellent fighting action makes it a great buy - one of those games that offers weeks of compelling play, the sort of title that MUST be played right through to its conclusion. I know it's an RPG and so won't gain mass acceptance, but rest assured: this game is just... EPIC!

RICH LEADBETTER

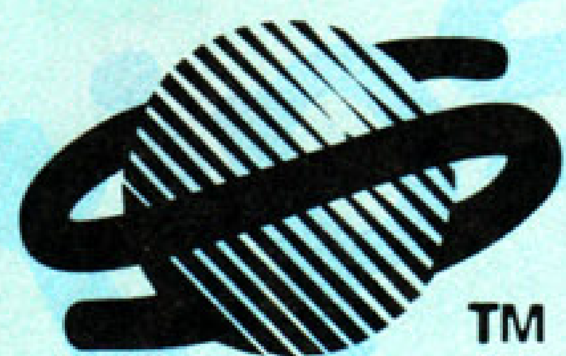




Rodi (left) is at first your enemy... until necessity forces him to become your ally!

The most advanced Shining game yet and a thoroughly enjoyable adventure in its own right, hours and DAYS slip away when you play this amazing game!

graphics	87
sound	88
playability	94
lastability	95
overall	93%



SEGA SATURN™ tips

There hasn't been many games released over the past month or so has there? Which will probably show in out tips pages this month, there aren't any spectacular tips this month but I am sure you'll be pleased with the ones we have printed this month. I am very sorry for the "Duff" Tomb Raider tip printed last month, the supposedly hot cheat came from Core themselves so we didn't print the tip based on rumours. Please keep sending your tips and cheats to: Tips Section, Sega Saturn Magazine, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle Of Dogs, London, E14 9TZ

TOMB RAIDER

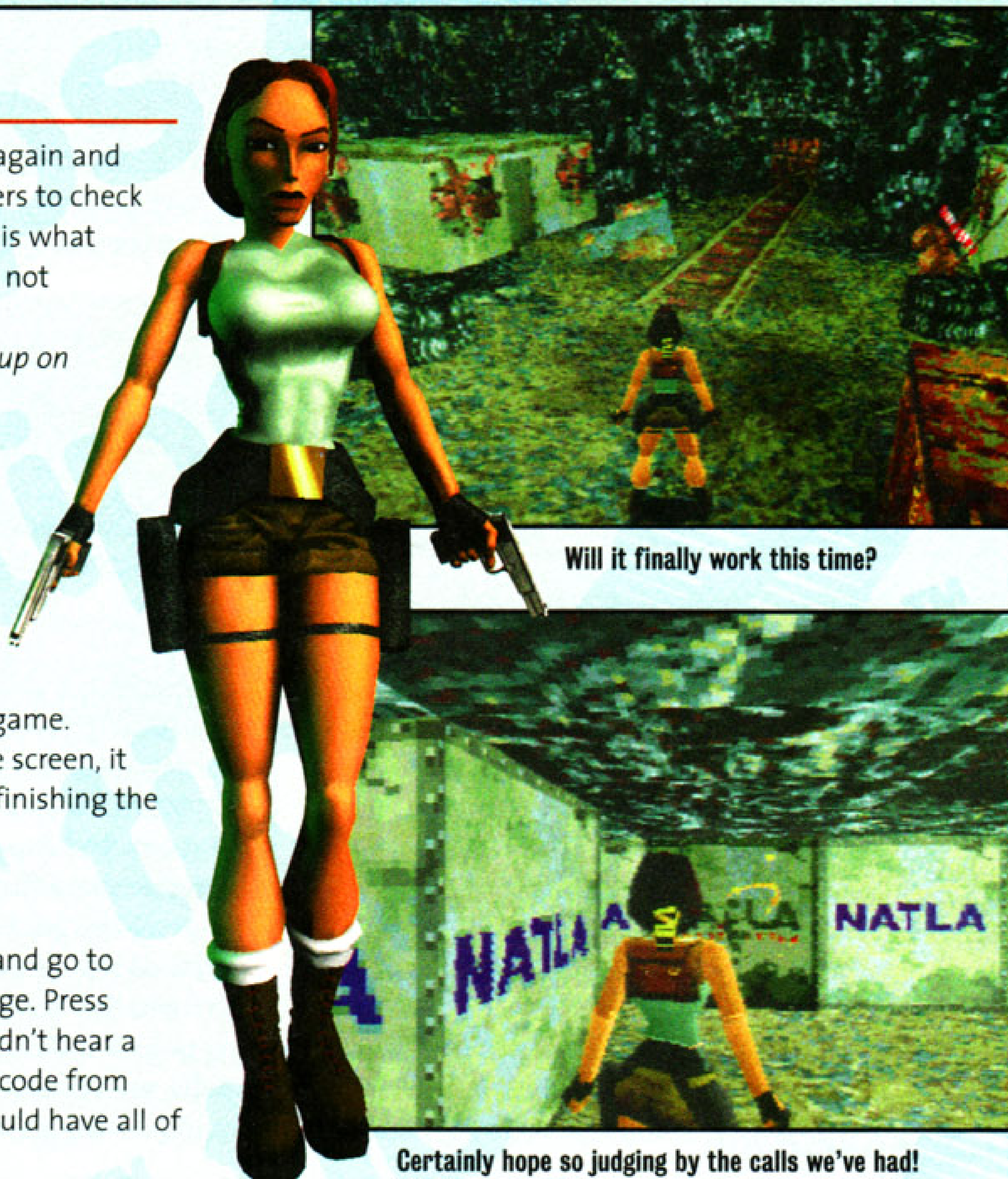
Okay people, I called upon Core again and spoke directly to the programmers to check out the level skip cheat and this is what they gave me. If these cheats do not work, you can stamp on my privates... Phil. (*I'll be taking you up on that - Rich*).

Stage Skip

While playing, pause the game and go to your passport. Flip to the last page. Press Z, Y, Z, Y, X, X, X, START, and you should hear a sound. Now use the exit page as if you were leaving the game. Instead of going back to the title screen, it should show you the screen for finishing the level.

Full Ammo Cheat

While playing, pause the game and go to your passport. Flip to the last page. Press X, Y, X, Y, Z, Z, Z, START. You shouldn't hear a sound. Then enter the level skip code from above. On the next level you should have all of the weapons.



Will it finally work this time?

Certainly hope so judging by the calls we've had!

ANDRETTI RACING

Here's a nice little tip to gain extra stock cars in Andretti's Racing
In the career mode enter your name as GO BRUINS! for 6 secret stock cars or if you want 7 secret stock cars enter your name as GO BEARS!



New cars ahoy!



And then some!



GUN GRIFFON

I am still getting queries about this game, so to put your minds at ease I dug up a few old cheats.

Unlimited Ammo
At the title screen press B, B, B, C, START
Invincibility Code
Press LEFT, RIGHT,B ,C ,C, START at the title screen.



Using these codes, you'll be able to kick some Russian ass and nick their Vodka at the same time... ha, ha!

NHL HOCKEY

A strange set of cheats here, try them yourself and have a laugh. Well a laugh of sorts any way.
During the 2 player (skating) introductions press the X, Y, Z buttons and the Left and Right buttons simultaneously. Then during the National Anthem press the following for different results.
L and R buttons for "Big Players"
A and X buttons for "The Gravity Sink" (puck goes to the centre or ice)
A and B buttons for "Midget Fatboys"
AYZ Buttons for "Upside Down Dudes"
XYR buttons for "Bouncy Puck"
Also, some codes can be combined, such as AYZ, then LR

Build a perfect player code

Are you getting a bit bored with the way the players are in this lacklustre so-called simulation of the game that is Ice Hockey. Well here's a code to change all of that right here!
When building a player, when setting the player attributes press A-B-C-X-Y-Z to allow the player to be perfect in every category. And away you go. Have some funn with this one...





MR BONES

Level Select
At the Start menu, press R, L, R, R, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, R. Then choose 'level select' which will now be highlighted just as if you had completed the game.

Silly Mr Bones
On any of the stages where you can blow off your body parts, do so, and use different combinations of X, Y, and Z to put yourself back together in different ways.

GRAVE ESCAPE
MAUSOLEUM
THE VALLEY
BLIND MAN'S CABIN
GUITAR SOLO
WHERE'S MY GUITAR?
NIGHT OF THE BATS
DAWN OF THE BATS
DAY OF THE BATS
ROLLING LOGS
DRUMATIC DISCOVERY
DRUM SOLO
TO THE WRAITH WORLD
GLASS SHARDS
BIG BONES
WRAITH SERENADE
VORTEX
FALLING HOME
UNDERWATER RIDE
LILLIPUTIAN NIGHTMARE
LITTLE PEOPLE VILLAGE
TO THE ICY LAKE
THE ICY LAKE
FROM BENEATH THE ICE
SHADOW MONSTER
THE GUARDIAN
DRY MOAT
EVOLUTION
HALL OF PANE
WHAT'S THAT RED STUFF?
SKELETISM GENERATOR
JUNIOR
FUNNY BONES
HEART OF DARKNESS
LOS ENDOS
SUNRISE

NEED FOR SPEED

Warrior Car and Lost Vegas track
Enter the tournament mode, put in 'TSYBNS' as your name, then exit the tournament mode. You should now have the Warrior Car and Lost Vegas track selectable.

Race on Dirt Roads
While selecting your track, hold in the L and R buttons, and you'll get a dirt road version of the selected track.

Two New Views
After playing for a while, pause the game, go into the Instant Replay option, and change the view to the highest. Then, press play, exit while holding B and press the change view button five times very quickly. It's tough to do, so it may not work the first time.

Change the Speedometer
At the Title screen, hold X+Y+Z on Controller 2 and on Controller 1 press START to begin a new game. Your speed with then be measured in kilometres per hour. What an utterly fascinating little cheat there.



ULTIMATE MK3

Play Human Smoke
Player 1: After selecting the robot hold Left+HP+BLOCK+HK+Run

Additional VS Kombat Codes
390-000 Player 1 inflicts half damage
000-390 Player 2 inflicts half damage
390-390 Both Players inflict half damage
722-722 Combo System Enabled
321-789 Super Run Jumps
555-556 Special Moves Disabled
688-433 Quick Uppercuts
040-404 Real Kombat
024-689 Super Endurance
975-310 Regenerating Power bars

Ultimate Code (Debug Menu)
At the title screen hit C,Right shift, A, Z, Y, C, Y, Right shift, A, X (Crazy Cyrax)
Hit Up on the main options to reveal the ? symbol.



Ultimate Mortal Kombat still has plenty of fans out there so these codes should help you out...





Cheats aplenty for this cracking Williams title.

WORLD WIDE SOCCER

It has to be said that Sega WorldWide Soccer is undoubtedly the best soccer simulation on Saturn by a huge chalk.
We printed a large amount of the special moves in the last edition of the magazine and just about the only remaining move is now printed right here for your fun and enjoyment.
So without any further ado, let's get on with the Rainbow Kick move!

Rainbow Kick
LEFT, LEFT-DOWN, DOWN, RIGHT-DOWN, RIGHT+B.





Sega WorldWide Soccer still rules in our book!

WORMS

New Weapons
At the Weapons Options screen, make sure the cursor is not highlighting any of the options, and press C + Z (x9). If done correctly, the new weapons should appear



VIRTUA COP2

Shrink the Bad Guys
To make all of the bad guys really small. Put game difficulty on easy, then on auto reload, play mode VC1, sight on then mirror mode on.



FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

Now the game has been officially unveiled we can reveal the cheats and stuff. There's plenty of hidden gear in this AMAZING game so let's stop arsing about and get to work! We're revealing some cheats this month and some in the next issue. Just to keep you interested.

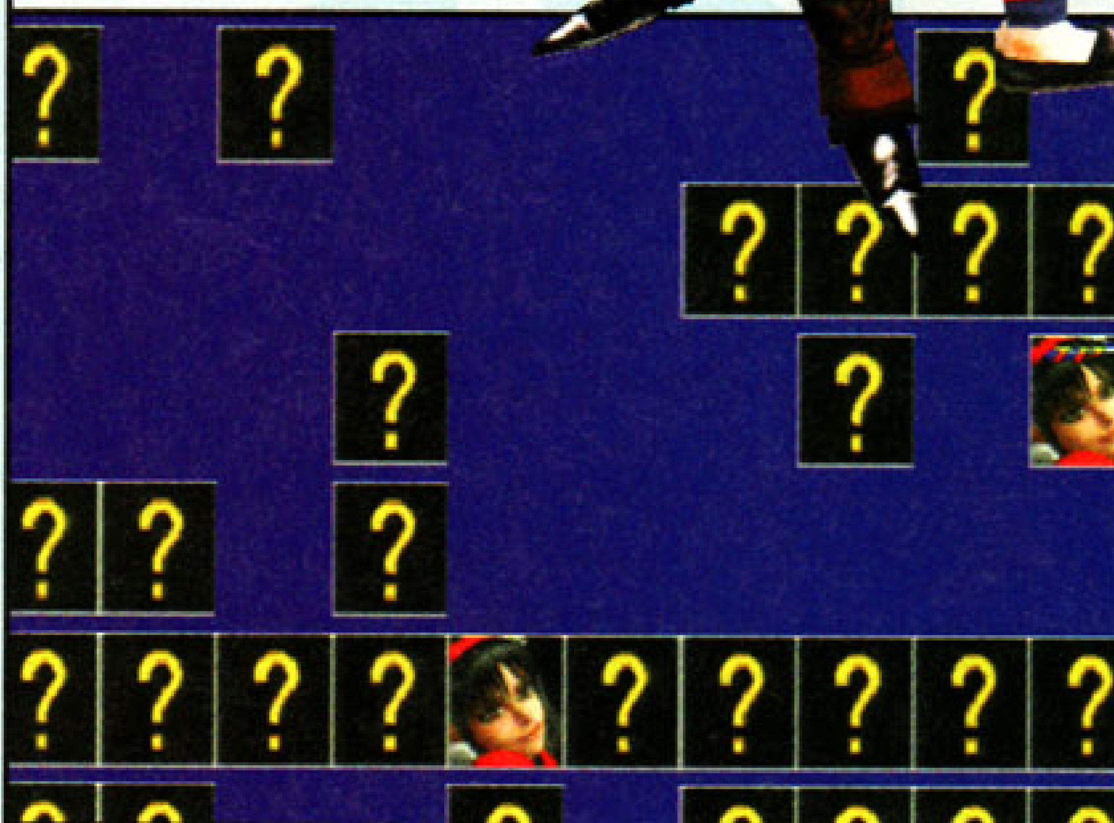
Secret Characters
Pretty obvious, really. The ten secret characters are accessed by completing each of the one-player courses. For new the School Girl Candy, simply press X when selecting her once you've completed the Novice course. However, before you steam through all of the different routes, perhaps you should take note of the next tip...

Patience Card Game
Complete all of the one-player courses, EXCEPT the last one. Now get over 1000 OKs on the Training Mode and now go to one-player mode and select the final course using the L button on the controller. A new mini-game is found!

Afterburner Plane
On BM's stage with a two-player game, have both players hold down their X buttons before the match begins. The Afterburner plane streaks over.

Music on Training Mode
You're likely to spend a lot of time in Training Mode and that music can really grate. Press Start and use the L and R buttons to cycle through every tune in the game!







DOOM

Invincibility
Yes, we know it's poor, but those of you who did buy this travesty might find this code rather handy - if only to get to the absymal Club Doom level. Pause the game, and type in: Down, Y, X, R, Right, L, Left, B. If the marine's eyes light up, the cheat has worked.



Become invincible on Saturn Doom. If you were lunatic enough to buy the game.

MANX TT SUPERBIKE

Fast Start
Press accelerate and brake when the announcer says "2"... then as he says "1" release the brake, and keep the accelerator revving at 10,000 rpm. Once he says "Go!", you'll have one hell of a fast start.



DIE HARD ARCADE

Remixed Soundtrack
Here's your chance to remix some of the game's ace tunes. At the title screen, press and hold X+Y+Z before you press Start to choose Die Hard Arcade.

Deep Scan Trick
At the title screen, press and hold X+Y+Z before you press Start to choose Deep Scan. When the game starts, a screen full of subs should all attack you at once. Getting tons of creds should be no problem.





CRUSADER NO REMORSE

These arrived at the last minute and should prove handy for anyone stuck on EA's isometric shoot-'em-up.

Easy Setting Passcodes

Level 2	FWQP
Level 3	PLRQ
Level 4	SZNF
Level 5	TD5S
Level 6	J1BT
Level 7	K2CV
Level 8	N3DW
Level 9	M4FX
Level 10	X5GZ
Level 11	C6HO
Level 12	D7J1
Level 13	F8K2
Level 14	FGL3
Level 15	JFM4





To see a picture of the development team, enter the password: LRTN.



Using these codes, you'll be able to kick some Ruskie ass and nick their Vodka at the same time... ha, ha!

BAKU BAKU ANIMAL

Tons of puzzle games have hit the market, yet Baku Baku remains one of the best!

League Mode
At the title screen, press B, A, C, Up, B, A, C, Up. You should hear voices shouting if the code worked. Go to the main menu and there will be a new option, "League Mode".



Baku Baku has a bidden league mode and you can discover it above this picture!

VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS

Fight Silver Dural
Highlight Akira on the character select screen and press Down, Up, Right, Left and A. To get golden Dural, press Down, Up, Left, Right and A.

Wireframe Mode
After beating the game on the hardest setting, hold down the L and R buttons when choosing your character.

Play as Fish Bowl Dural
After entering the Dural select code, press and hold C when you choose between Normal and Kids mode, and keep it held until the match begins. Dural's head should be transparent, and have a fish swimming around inside it. Hilarious eh?

Watch Mode Camera Angles
While in Watch mode, hit X to get a random camera angle. After doing so, you can use any of the following to switch camera angles: L, R, X, Y, Z, A, B, C.

Special Win Poses
If you win with a Time Over with either Jacky or Shun Di, you get a special 'Java Tea' pose.

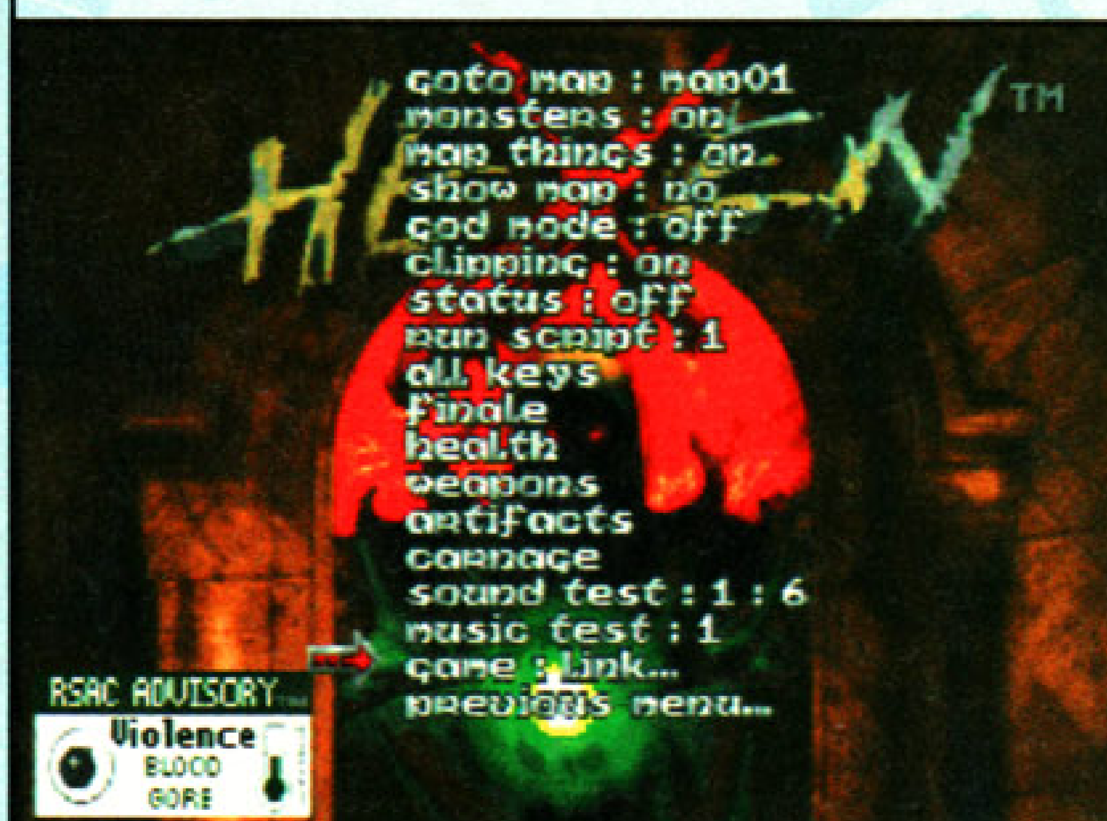
Combo Master Mode
After choosing your character, then when deciding between Normal and Kids, press Up ten times. The words "Combo Master Mode" should appear near the bottom of the screen.





Virtua Fighter Kids has more hidden codes than Virtua Fighter 2 - and they're all pretty damn cool! Fishbowl Head Dural is pretty cool as is the Fighters' Eyes mode!

HEXEN



The Best Code Ever! We Wish...
This only happens to be one of the most exciting codes we've ever printed... and in many ways one of the most disappointing. This Hexen code opens up every single cheat mode you can imagine - the ability to walk through walls, god mode for invincibility... and what's this... LINK-UP MODE?!
Still, here's the code. Enter it on the options screen: Up, Down, Left, Right, Y, Y, Z, Z, A, X, Up, Down, C, B.
We have to admit to being super-excited about the potential of link-up gameplay! Hexen was one of the best multi-player games on PC until Quake turned up and we were gagging for a go. Once we appropriated the link-cable we sat down and got to work only to discover the following... it only just works. Frame rate changes with the tide, you can't restart once you've died and also the game loses synchronisation, meaning that the two of you aren't communicating properly, leading to a crash. Oh well, it's a great cheat any way and since hardly any of you have a link-up cable any way, it's unlikely to affect you. However, it's a shame that the majority of the work (DeathMatch only objects) has been put it. Very frustrating. Probe Software, you've let us down.





What a crying shame that the link-up doesn't work. Otherwise this would be the best tip of all time!



Maybe it's goading you a bit to show the previously hidden link-up mode but no-one was more disappointed than us that Probe didn't get the link-up mode working properly.

Q&A TIPS CENTRE

Once again, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE aims to help out the stuck gamesplayers around Europe with their most difficult gaming problems. Name a game you're stuck at, describe the problem and we shall solve it for you. It's that simple. Just write away NOW to Q+A TIPS CENTRE, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ. We beseech you not to phone us up with your tips queries: if we took all your calls you'd never get a magazine in time! We will endevour to reply to ALL tips queries in the tips pages. Hence the name.

Julie Haswell's problem: Getting past Karnack Sanctuary and Sobek Mountain Shrine
The other camels at the Karnak Sanctuary and the Sobek Mountain Shrine can't be reached until you collect artifacts later in the game. To get the Symbol of War in the Nile Gorge, run along the platform opposite where you can see the Symbol, and jump off the edge. Hold the jump button down to float around the corner and you'll reach a ledge leading to the Symbol.

Glenn Langridge's problem: Can't get past Amun Mines in Exhumed
Fool. After destroying the creature in the Set Arena, head for the Amun Mines and drop down the huge shaft in the middle of the level. Now you have the Shawl of Isis you can float down to reach the exit to the next level. To be honest if you'd looked at the brilliant Exhumed map we printed in issue #13 of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, you would have instantly have seen that the shawl is needed to progress. We're going to have to do a decent back issues ad for the next issue, obviously.

Mr A Bagle's Problem: No good at Blam! Machinehead
Here we go, I have compiled the complete list of passcodes for this rather hard game, I hope you find them useful. To answer the problem that you had, you might have copied the passcode wrong, therefore when it was re-entered it was invalid. Still, I'm giving you the personal Phil Dawson guarantee that these tips will work, so if they don't feel free to phone me up and give me the most rampant abuse imaginable. (*please do any way - Rich*)

1.2 Q58NM LDZCQ 4HWGE
1.3 TDM75 UH8OT X06BE
1.4 VO1PP JCP6V H4ULJ
2.1 0F20F 0HX8Y OE95W
2.2 42W3T JGK-P 5K5H7
2.3 VR4T2 6EZD5 SHCMM
2.4 1NBCX CXVI6 PA3K1
2.5 ZF0XD Y5KXJ Q2NGZ
3.1 2XVSD AHO3J S2MF-
3.2 W0J8H 3Y8-D -7FRU
3.3 THYDH 0MZDU 3CZFK
3.4 1SOJ3 130BP V2MW8
4.1 YCTS6 PUUKS 28SD1
4.2 Q29LH UDUY4 21FSD
4.3 WS7Y6 HQPIW BOFGK
4.4 2RHK4 RB9RU Z1IT2
END UP405 C42R1 2MP3P

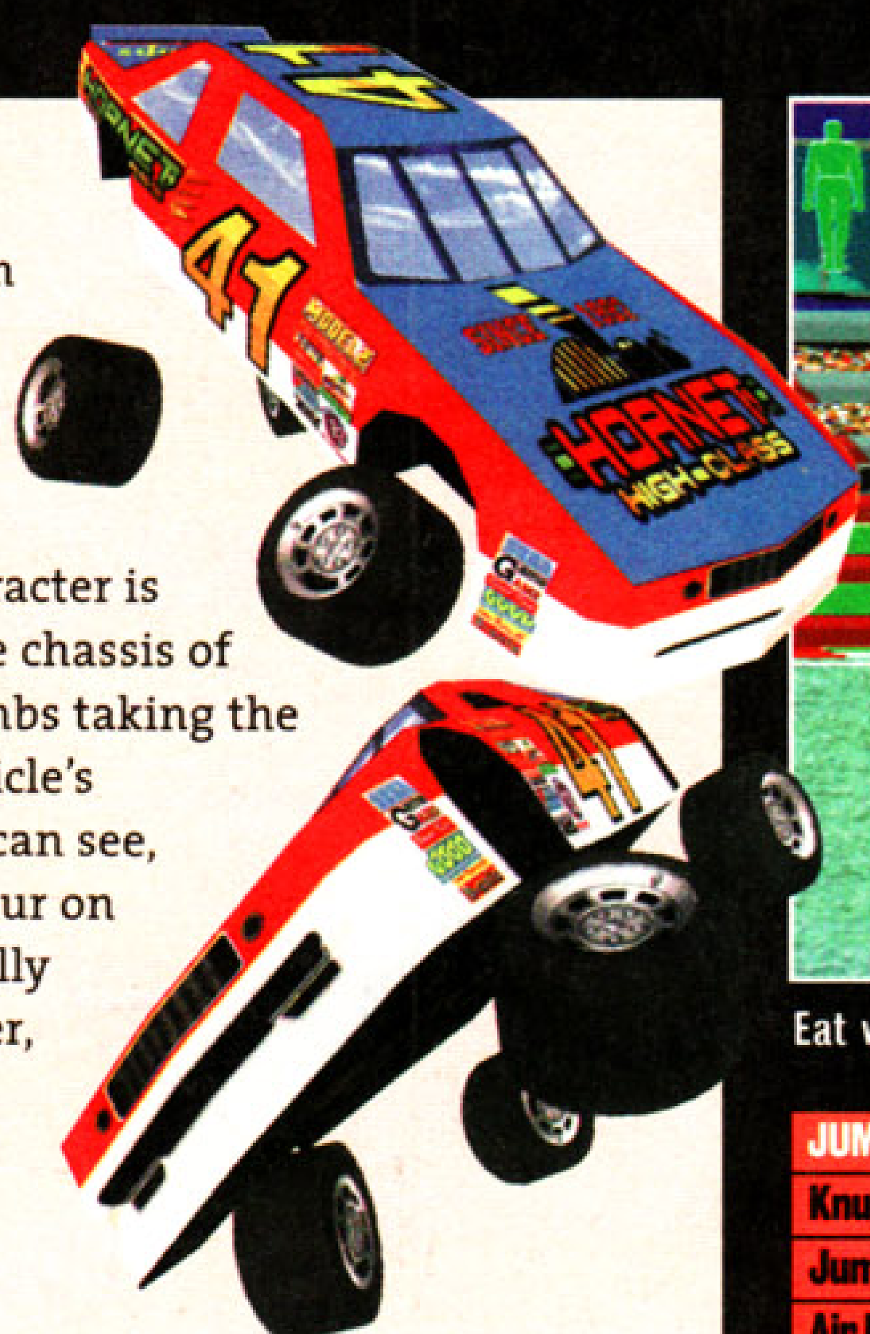
Fighters Megamix

PART 2

This issue, as promised, we reveal full moves list for every secret character in Fighters MegaMix. Last issue we kicked off this guide with full technique lists for the ace Rentahero and the unstoppable Ura Bahn. This month, we have more fighters! We've deliberately missed out Kids Akira and Kids Sarah since their moves are the same as their adult counterparts - and you can get those moves on the Training Mode...

HORNET

The Hornet from Daytona USA is one of the most bizarre characters. The body of the character is formed with the chassis of the car, with limbs taking the form of the vehicle's wheels. As you can see, with body armour on the car is virtually useless. However, pressing b+P+K removes the armour and opens up more moves!









Eat wheel you metallic moron! Hornet smacks VF boss, Dural.



Hornet's wheels are his equivalent of arms and legs!

WITHOUT BODY ARMOUR

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
Super Straight	➡ P
Iron Elbow	⇨P
Fire Upper	⬂ P
Steele Upper	⇨⇨P
Elbow Combo	⇨⇨P⇨P
Elbow Iron Mountain	⇨⇨P⇦⇨P+K
Spirit Elbow	⇦⇨P
Dragon Elbow	⇨⇩⬂P
Double Dragon Elbow	⇨⇩⬂P⇨⇩⬂P
Shell Break Cannon	⇦⇩⬃P
Violent Shell Break Cannon	⇦⇩⬃PP
Violent Fire Break Cannon	⇦⇩⬃P⇨⇩⬂P
Shocker Turn	⬇ ➡ P+K
Rekka Ido	⇦⬂ P+K
Iron Mountain	⇦⇨⇨P+K
Elbow Gun	⇦ P
Super Blade	P+K+G
Light Break Down	⬊⬂ P
Demon Pain	➡ K
Hyper Demon Pain	⇨⇨K
Double Wish Bone	⬂ K

JUMP ATTACKS	METHOD
Knuckle Hammer	⬆P
Jump Toe	⬆ K
Air Rolling Sobat	⬆K
Front Air Kick	⬆⇨K
Back Air Kick	⬆⇦K
Air Dive	⬆⇩K
Flare Toe	⬆ +K (before reach ground)
Flare Kick	⬆⇩ +K (before reach ground)
Knuckle Hammer	⇧ +P
Middle Rolling Sobat	⬃K
Rolling Sobat	⇧K
Toe Kick	⇧ +K
Side Kick	⇧K (before reach ground)
Low Cut Kick	⇧⇨K (before ground)

REGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Front Drive	P
Front Suspension	⇩P
Rear Drive	K
Rear Suspension	⇩K

THROWS	METHOD
Deadly Wheel Spin	P+G
Down Force Compressor	P+G (behind)
Elbow Top Arrow Fork	P+G (side)
Throw Down	⇦ P+G
True Power Destruction	⬃⇨P+G
Super Triple Blade	⇦⇨P+K

DASH ATTACKS (during dash)	METHOD
Running Straight	P
Running Knee	K
Running Jump Kick	⬃ K
Running Tackle	P+G
Dash Iron Mountain	P+K
Sliding Kick	⇩K

DOWN ATTACKS (opponent down)	METHOD
Kamikaze	⇧P
Trust	⇩P
Final Trust	⇩PP
Scuffle Kick	⇩K

WITH BODY ARMOUR

REGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Front Suspension	P
Rear Drive	K

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
Wheel Lick	⇨P
Mad Drive	⇨⇨P
Double Wish Bone	⬂P
Spark Ignition	⇦P+K

THROWS	METHOD
Deadly Wheel Spin	P+G
Down Force Commpressor	P+G (behind)





Once his armour is removed, Hornet plays similarly to Bahn.

REAR ATTACKS (back to opponent)	METHOD
Turn Knuckle	P
Turn Double Knuckle	PP
Turn Kick	K
Spin Turn Kick	⇧K
Low Turn Punch	⇩P
Low Spin Kick Turn	⇩K



JANET

What could have been a simple novelty character actually turns out to be one of the most complete fighters in the secret line-up. Janet shares a great deal of her moves with Aoi from VF 3, making her a good character to get some practise in with! One thing that is lacking is Aoi's chained multiple bone-breaking throws.... A cool character, Janet's bone-rending techniques make her an extremely popular fighter... just don't bother being cheesy with the Virtua Gun, please!



REGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Jab	P
Low Jab	⬇P
High Kick	K
Low Kick	⬇K

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
Double Punch	PP
Double Punch Elbow	PPP
Backhand	P+K
Backhand 2	P+K P
Backhand 3	P+K PP
Chop	⇨P+K
Ousya-Elbow	⇨P+K P
Fuzakura	⇨⇨P+K
Jouseiryusensyou ax	⇦⇦P+K
Middle Élbow Strike	⇨P
Senzakura	⇨⇨PP
Sodeshin Fist	⬁P
Musoha	⬇⬁P
Koromoguruma	⇨⇨P
Double Handed Push	⇩⇩P
Houousya	⬁P+K
Double Punch Ouda	PP⇨P
Double Punch Kiniguruma	PP⇨PP
Chain Blade	KK
Shoukeri Gasane	PK
Nirentotsu Gikyaku	PPK
Rentotsu Kodachi	PPPK
Inside Heel Kick	⬁K
Divine Thunder Style	⇨K
Cloud Kick	⇨KK
Heel Kick	⬀K
Grass Cutter	⇩K+G
Continous Grass Cutter	PPP⇩K
Spin Continous Strike	⇨⇨P⇩P
Uzumaki Syutou	⇨⇨P
Virtua Gun	⇦⇨P+K (guard impossible)
Virtua Gun 2	⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K (guard impossible)
Virtua Gun 3	⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K (guard impossible)
Reload	⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K ⇦⇨P+K

DASH ATTACKS (during dash)	METHOD
Running Punch	P
Running Kick	K
Sliding Kick	⇩K

REVERSALS	METHOD
Tenshin Nyushin	⇦P+K (reverse high punch)
Edasaki	⇦P+K (reverse high kick)
Small Wave	⇦P+K (high spin kick reversal)
Ryu no agito	⬀P+K (elbow reversal)
Tsutakazura	⬀P+K (mid-kick reverse)
Gale Wheel	⬀P+K (reverse knee attacks)
Ohuzu	⬂P+K (kickflip reversal)
Senryu	⇩P+K (low punch reversal)
Kaede Drop	⇩P+K (low kick reversal)



Sanman's clumsy attack is easily reversed by the ace Janet!

THROWS	METHOD
Palm Strike	P+G
Ayatedori	P+G (side)
Sugi Drop	P+G (behind)
Konoha Drop	⬁P+G
Rokkudan Belt Taker	⇦P+G
Aiki Throw	⬇⇨P+G
Grip Shock	⇨⬁⇩⬀⇦P+G
Tekime Toushin	⇩G+P+K

DOWN ATTACKS (opponent down)	METHOD
Kusei Gatotsu Kick	⇧P
Kusei Koma Chop	⬆P
Standing Chop	⬁P





REAR ATTACKS (back to opponent)	METHOD
Spinning Chop	P
Spin Low Kick	⇩K
Spinning Shin Kick	⬁K
Side Kick	K
Spinning Chop	⇩P
Turning Backfist	⬇P
Turning Low Kick	⬇K



Central to the character of Janet are her reversal attacks. These enable her to counter just about any strike and usually ends up with her opponent having a limb broken. Youch!

JUMP ATTACKS	METHOD
Hisya Strike	⬆⇨P
Mikazuki Kick	⬆K
Jumping Sokutou	⬆K
Back Reverse Kick	⬆⇦K
Konoha Kick	⬆+K (before reach ground)
Flying Chop	⇧P
Flying Chop	⇧P
Jumping Front Kick	⇧K
Jumping Heel Kick	⇧K
Jumping Heel Kick	⇧K (before you reach ground)





In actual fact, Janet has many variations of the Virtua Gun attack (her one addition to Aoi's moves list), including a "Reload!" homage to her Virtua Cop 2 origins. But it really is a cheesy move that experts should avoid.



This character is brilliant practise for the wonders of Aoi Umenokoji from Virtua Fighter 3. A vast majority of her moves make up Janet's repertoire!



SIBA

Originally known as Shiva, this character was present in an early pre-production version of the original Virtua Fighter arcade machine and having played it we can say that he really didn't do much. Siba is the MegaMix rendition of this character who initially seems to be bereft of special moves. Not so. They're just very hard to do. The best moves in Siba's repertoire involve using his scimitar - particularly deadly with a floating strike.

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
Pugnus	⇨⇨P+K
Pugilar Tooth	⇨⇨P+KPP
Kubi Tomb	⇨P
Men Tomb	⬁P
Als Gradii	⇨⇨P (guard impossible)
Sanktio	⇨P (guard reversal)
Difensio Gradius	⇦P (guard reversal)
Odiem Pugnus	P+K
Ohsa Kapdis	G+P+K
Medius Locks	⇧G ⇩P (guard reversal)
Medius Locks	⇧G ⇩P+K (guard reversal)
Pugna Singularis	⇧G ⇩P+K⇨⇨P (guard reversal)
Keltarmen Singulare	⇧G ⇩P+K⇨⇨P ⇦⇨P (guard reversal)
Extore Singulare	⇧G ⇩P+K⇨⇨P ⇦⇨P⇦P (guard reversal)
Quilkui Tooth	K when hit KP
Guardium	⇨⇨P+KK
Inkulesio Spita	⇨⇨P+K K
Kilkito Aatoleta	K when hit, K P K+G
Deegless	⬁K
Elatio Volputaria	⇨⇨P+K PPK
Kilkito Koksa Felm	K when hit, KP ⇩K+G



One of Siba's more amusing throws sees him grabbing his opponent and decking them with a powerful headbutt.

REAR ATTACKS (back to opponent)	METHOD
Telgm Pugnus	P
Telgm Facta	PP
Telgm Feml	K
Telgm Kolunba	⇧K
Telgm Koksa Pugnus	⇩P
Telgm Koksa Feml	⬇K



Overhead scimitar attack!



You can't guard against this.

DOWN ATTACKS (opponent down)	METHOD
Akro Pattes	⇧P
Ramia Seplkulm	⇩P
Grops	⇩K

JUMP ATTACKS	METHOD
Audi Tio	⬆P
Fabra	⬆⇨P
Aukutol	⬆K
Hilundo	⬆ +K
Leguls	⬆⇨K
Motor Killer	⬆⇦K
Akuila	⬆⇩K
Aki Pittel	⬆K (before you reach ground)
Meelus	⬆⇩ +K (before reach ground)
Kolniks	⇧P
Luskinia	⬃K
Kolunba	⇧K
Pussitackla	⇧K
Gutrinula	⇧K (before you reach ground)
Ansel	⇧⇩K (before reach ground)



Siba has various swiping attacks with his scimitar, each designed to hit at a different height.

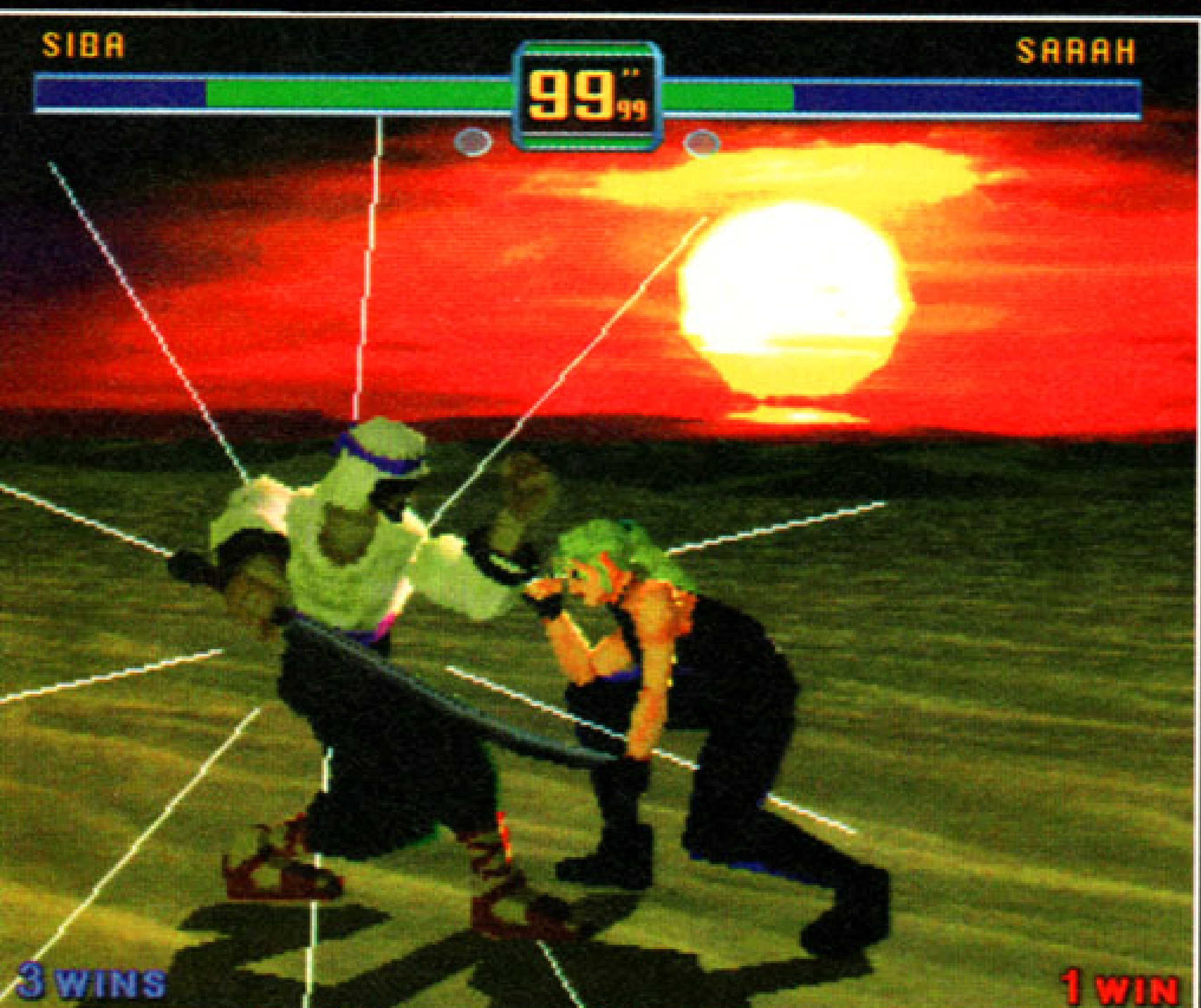
DASH ATTACKS (during dash)	METHOD
Iile Pugnus	P
Iile Genu	K
Iile Luskinear	⬃K
Iile Kolunba	⇧K
Iile Ulumes	P+G
Iile Torahele	⇩K

REGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Pugnus	P
Koksa Pugnus	⇩P
Feml	K
Koksa Feml	⇩K

THROWS	METHOD
Lukta Tio	P+G
Pulehendl	P+G (side)
Spina Dolci	P+G (behind)
Sanguis Kuramale	⇦⇨G+P+K



Siba might be a Virtua Fighter 1 character, but having played him before he was taken out of the game, we can reveal that he has a completely different moves list. And here it is!



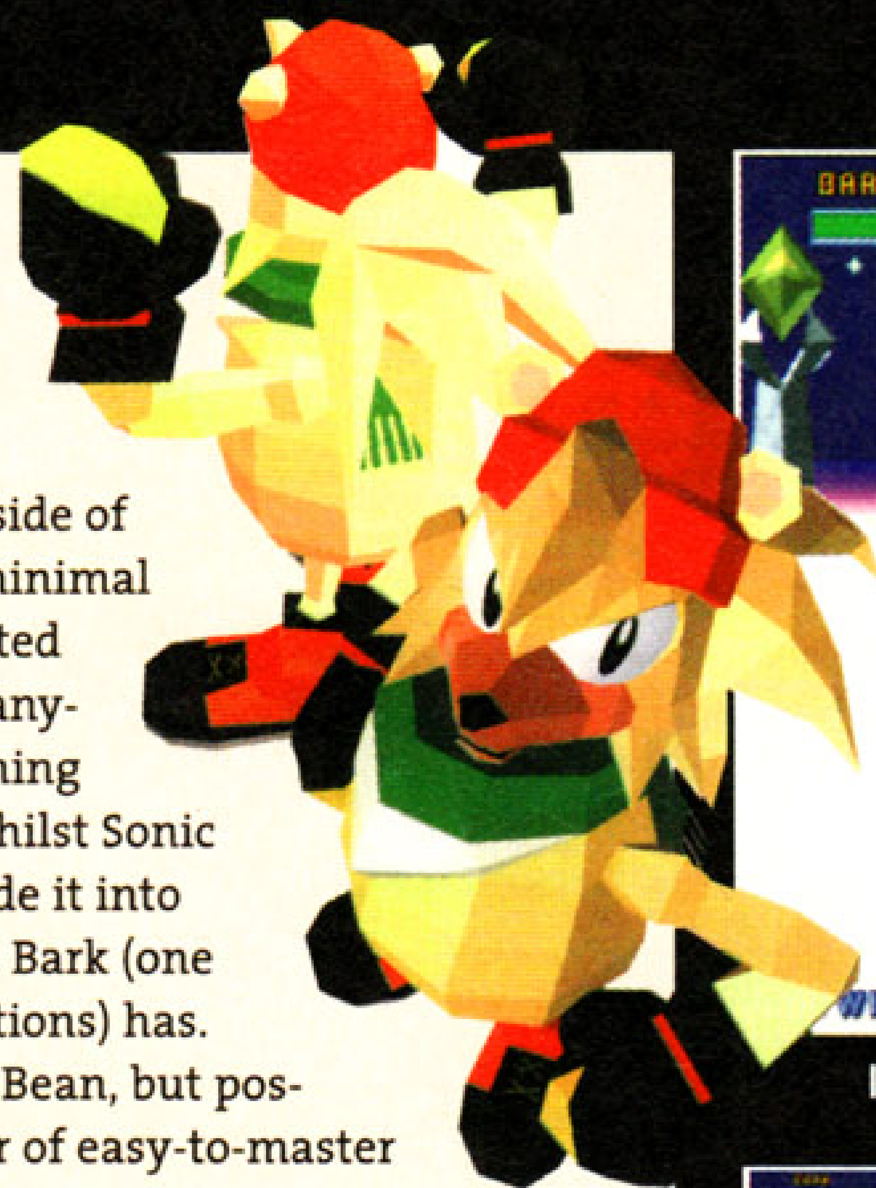
The easiest Siba move is undoubtedly his power counter, activated simply by pulling back and pressing punch. This absorbs any attack and is also impossible for your opponent to dodge. Cheesy? Perhaps.



Siba's only armed with a couple of throws, but to be honest that's all he needs. Here he's pinched one of Kage's attacks.



Having decked Lau with an overhead swipe, Siba closes in for extra damage with a swift soccer kick style attack.



BARK

Sonic Fighters never really received a proper arcade release outside of Japan, with only minimal support in the United States and hardly anything at all happening in the UK. D'oh! Whilst Sonic himself hasn't made it into Fighters MegaMix, Bark (one of AM2's own creations) has. Not as versatile as Bean, but possessed of a number of easy-to-master combinations which are cool. We'll have Bean's moves in the next issue of the mag - lack of space this issue!



It's a Sonic Fighters reunion grudge battle!



Both of the Sonic Fighters have attacks and moves that they can use only on another Sonic Fighter or on one of the Virtua Fighter Kids. Weird, but true.



Smack! Down Kumachan!



Ouch... now that's painful.

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
One Two Punch	PP
One Two Gan!	PP⇩P
Scissor Punch	⇨P
Twice Scissor Punch	⇨PP
Third Scissor Punch	⇨PPP
LowPunch	➡ P
Low Hook	➡ PP
Guard & Attack	⇦P
Destroy and Gan!	⇩PP
Bark Upper	⬀P
Shit Punch	⬁⬀P
Bark Elbow	⇦⇨P
Bark Elbow Combo	⇦⇨PP
Big Wheel Punch	P+K
Big Wheel Punch	⇨P+K

DOWN ATTACKS (opponent down)	METHOD
Stomp	⇩K

REGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Bark Punch	P
Destructive Punch	⇩P
Swing Kick	K

DASH ATTACKS	METHOD
Blow Away during dash,	P
Drop Kickduring dash,	K

THROWS	METHOD
Continous Pummelling	P+G
Splat! Splat!	⇦⇨⇦P+G
Bark Strike	⬁⬀P+G
Head Throw	⇨⇩P+G
Grab & Gan Gan!	⇩⇩P+G
Giant Swing	⇦⬁⇩⬀⇨ +P+G

EXTRA (*works on Bean or Kids)	METHOD
Hyper Start	⇦P+K
Barrier Walk	⇨⇨G+P+K*
Vicinity Turn	G+P+K (near opponent)*
Wall Double Handed Hammer	P (while running up wall)
Wall Stamp	K (while running up wall)
Wall Climb	⇨⇨ (running towards wall)

JUMPING ATTACKS	METHOD
Hop Punch	⇧P
Hop Kick	⇧K
Double Handed Hammer Dive	⬆P
Air Hammer	⬆ +P
Knuckle Drop	⬆ +P (before reach ground)
Hip Dive	⬆ +K
Air Kick	⬆K

REAR ATTACKS (back to opponent)	METHOD
Turning Punch	P
Turning High Kick	K
Turning One Two Punch	PP
Turning One Two Gan!	PP⇩P



DEKU

This bizarre character is the only new fighter that AM2 have added in to Fighters MegaMix, and he's kind of like a live runner-bean with lethal martial arts capabilities! In actual fact, Deku is more of a comedic addition really as opposed to a serious fighter.







DEKUREGULAR ATTACKS	METHOD
Deku Punch	P
Deku Crouching Punch	⇩P
Deku Kick	K
Deku Crouching Low Kick	⇩K

SPECIAL ATTACKS	METHOD
Deku Elbow	⇨P
Deku Upper	⬀P
Deku Upper Upper	⬀PP
Deku Hammer	⇩G+P+K
Deku The Violence	⇦⬁⇩⬀⇨G+P+K
Deku Middle Kick	⬀K
Deku Knee	⇨K

DASH ATTACKS (during dash)	METHOD
Deku Body Attack	P
Deku Banana Attack	K
Running Jump Kick Classic	⬃K
Deku Running Spin Kick	⇧K
Deku Head Attack	P+G
Deku Sliding Kick	⇩K

JUMPING ATTACKS	METHOD
Deku Fall	⬆P
Deku Hammer Fall	⬆t+P
Jump Toe Classic	⬆K
Front Jump Toe Classic	⬃K
Deku Falling Ass	⬆K
Deku Front Air Kick	⬆⇨K
Deku Back Air Kick	⬆⇦K
Deku Air Dive	⬆⇩K
Deku Flare Toe	⬆K (before you reach ground)
Deku Flare Kick	⬆⇩K (before reach ground)
Deku Jump Hammer	⇧P
Deku Rolling Sobat	⇧K
Deku Somer	⬂K
Deku Low Cut Kick	⇧⇩K

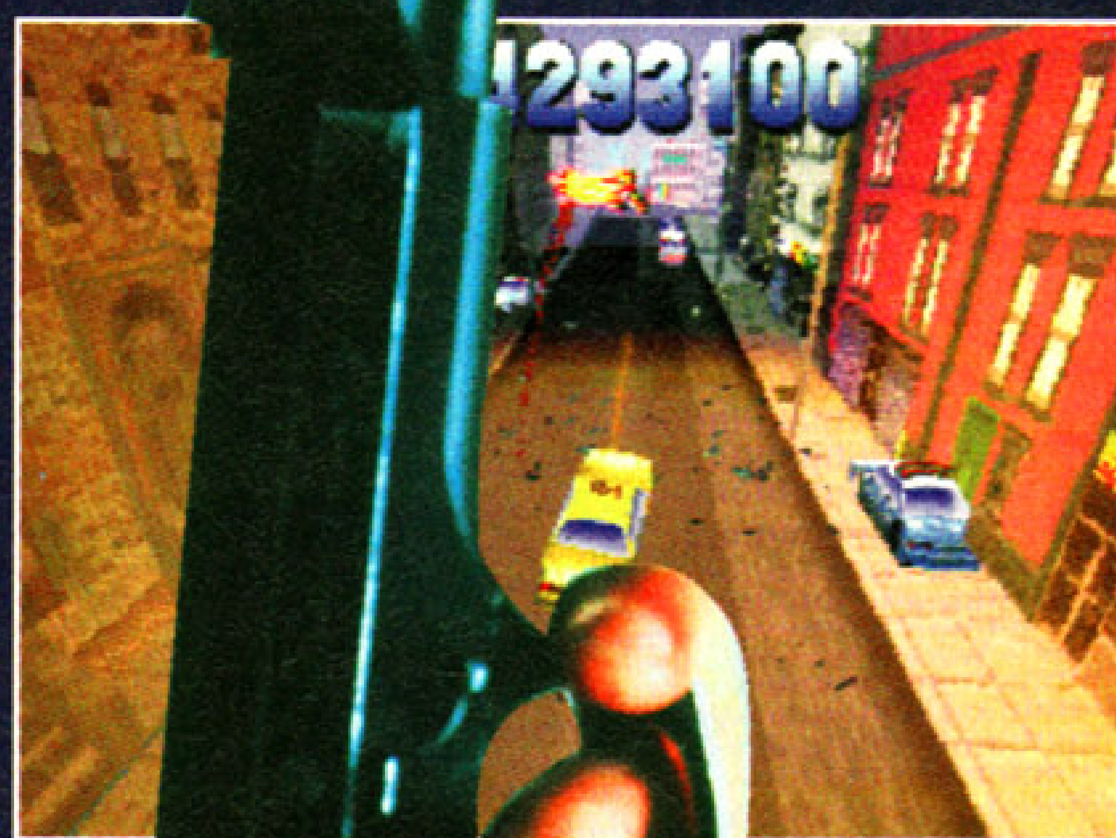
DOWN ATTACKS (opponent down)	METHOD
Deku Banana Burger	⇧P
Deku Stomp	⇩K

THROWS	METHOD
Deku Nice Cannear opponent,	P+G
Deku Scratch	P+G (opponent back to wall)
Deku Hand Wall Crash	P+G (your back to wall)

REAR ATTACKS (back to opponent)	METHOD
Deku Turn Knuckle	P
Deku Turn Knuckle Punch	PP
Deku Turn Kick	K
Deku Spin Kick Turn	⇧K
Deku Low Turn Punch	⇩P

Die Hard Trilogy PART 3

At last we reach the end of our definitive Die Hard Trilogy Players Guide. Our final part sees John McClane driving around in rush hour traffic trying to displace bombs left by the infamous Simon Grüber. Simon says: "Load up Die Hard With A Vengeance and follow this guide!"







Okay, okay infinite lives, I know. But you didn't expect me to play through the game properly did you? See small tips for the cheat.

There are 15 levels within Vengeance, six of which are sort of bonus games consisting of McClane having to race trucks through subway and aqueduct tunnels. Within each bonus game various pick-ups are collected; these include extra lives, Turbos and Point shields.



HELLO JOHN, GOT A NEW MOTOR?

As McClane makes his way through the streets of New York, look out for a blue line that pops up on the radar. This indicates a hidden parking lot where a new vehicle is waiting. Making your way to a new car can take up precious time so make sure you have enough time to reach the bomb afterwards. Here are the cars that I found on my journey through New York:

FERRARI

Grab one of these babies and your sure to pick up a couple of speeding tickets. Along with the Porsche, Ferraris are the fastest cars you'll find in the game, fast acceleration and top handling makes the Ferrari a must for all speed freaks. Get one of these babies and any poncy Posh Spice Girl will be yours. Roll on Victoria!

PORSCHE

Just like the Ferrari, Porsche have come up with a car that is both good on handling and speed. Find any of these two cars and you're able to breeze through the entire level, huzzah!



TAXI
This is your primary vehicle, it's not particually fast but it does the job. You'll breeze through the first couple of levels no problem, but after that you'd better start looking for a new motor.

POLICE CAR
Not much difference from the Taxi really except for the blue flashing lights. It may be a little faster but I'm not sure, the police car looks cooler though.

BMW
An upgrade from the police and taxi cars, the BMWs are much faster and the handling is quicker to boot. Although not quite as good as the Porsche or Ferrari, a nice shiny BMW is a good car to collect.

SCHOOL BUS
Remember Nightmare on Elm Street 2? Well pick up one of these and you'll be able to drive like Freddy. Although the school bus is relatively slow, it can break through masses of traffic like nobody's business. So no need for Emergency Vehicles here to help you through traffic.

LORRY
Much the same as the school bus but a little slower. When driving one of these monsters, traffic will literally stay out your way. Remember to use the horn, we don't want to see innocent pedestrians stuck to the tyres do we?





A walk in the park can lead to disaster when you're with Phil.



BOMBS EVERYWHERE
For all the city levels there are on average seven bombs to find before they go off. Use the red line on the radar to find each bomb, you must keep the line facing north in order to find the bomb.Chasing bombs cars is relatively simple, it's easy to think that they drive around the area randomly but in fact they have a set route. Once you become used to the route they drive, smashing them to smithereens shouldn't be a problem.







Above – Look out for the various pick-up shields scattered around the city. These are often your route to success.
Below – Follow the blue pointer on the radar to find extra cars. A police car is our choice this time, together with criminal.



LEVEL ONE: HARLEM

Bomb 1: A garbage bin in middle of the street, at the start of the level turn first left and the bomb is straight ahead.
Bomb 2: It's a bit of a long drive to the next bomb but before you start to line up the red arrow on the radar, turn left then sharp right to find the police car. Once you have the new vehicle, follow the red line to the second bomb which is hidden inside a black car.
Bomb 3: Keep the red arrow pointing upwards and you should drive down a street paved with point shields. Do a quick right and smash through a set of police barriers,





then sharp left toward the bomb beside the park.
Bomb 4: Follow the red line until you reach an Emergency Services Vehicle. Now stay behind the ambulance as it will clear any traffic blocking the road. The bomb is located on the corner of the sidewalk in a telephone box.
Bomb 5: The first of the Bomb Cars awaits, just follow it around the block (set route) and ram it from behind four times.
Bomb 6: Now follow the blue line on the radar to find a lovely BMW. The bomb is located behind the large building next to the parking lot, you must drive around the building bearing in mind that you must follow the red line to find the bomb.
Bomb 7: Keep to the red line and eventually you arrive at a few road blocks. Use a turbo or two to break through the mass of cars, then head for the telephone box on the corner of the crossroads.

LEVEL 2: THE SUBWAY (BONUS)

McClane races the dump truck through the subway tunnel to the bomb. Half way through the race there will be an extra life shield in the middle of the tunnel. Don't bother using any turbos during the race, but at the end of the tunnel use one to boost ahead of the truck and hit the bomb.

LEVEL 3: CENTRAL PARK

Bomb 1: As soon as the game begins, turn around 180 degrees and collect the extra life and time shield. Quickly turn back and turbo to reach the first bomb.
Bomb 2: Another bomb car this time in the form of a taxi. The taxi will stay on the path so this one is easy, ram it 4 times to proceed to the next bomb.
Bomb 3: Turn around and follow the path laidend with time shields, follow the shields up until the launch pad then collect the EMS shield. Chase the ambulance to find the third bomb.
Bomb 4: Again drive straight ahead and follow the tine shield to a hidden launch pad. After crossing the water, turn right 90 degrees and hit the police car on the bridge to defuse the bomb.
Bomb 5: This time the bomb car is a comical hot-dog van, keep on its tail and ram it four times. It stays on the path most of the time, just before the van reaches the road it heads right and cross over the grass to the next path. Stay behind it as best you can, if you find that it is gaining a little distance use a turbo to catch up.
Bomb 6: Keep the red arrow pointing north and you're led over some grassy hills which lead to a small road section. The bomb is found in a telephone box in the middle of the road.
Bomb 7: Another bomb car, this time in the form of a speedy white saloon. Chase it around the grassy areas and hit it four times. Keep behind the car as it leads you towards time shields which are crucial in order to complete the level.
Bomb 8: Follow the red line on the radar and watch out for the water. Soon you'll get back to the main



Chasing bombs cars is a good laugh. It's 3D chase HQ, innit!.

path, follow it along to reach the bomb.
Bomb 9: A wailing police car is the last of the bomb cars for this level, keep behind it until you pass over a small bridge. If you look to the right there's a long line of time shields spanning over the grassy area. Even though the bomb car does not take this route, follow the time shields over the grass and the bomb car will catch you up. Hit the car four times to finish it off.

LEVEL 4: THE SUBWAY (BONUS)

Slightly harder than the last subway encounter, this time the course forks in a couple of sections. It does not matter which fork you take as they both lead the same way. Try to stay in the middle of each fork as the dump truck is not able to pass and pushes you forwards. Look out for the extra life along the way, again use a turbo on the last stretch to get to the bomb before the truck does.

LEVEL 5: CHINA TOWN

Bomb 1: If you follow the arrow on the radar, you're taken through the back streets of China Town. Along the way are some point shields to be collected. Hit the launch pad to launch yourself over the large truck and hit the bomb.
Bomb 2: A bit of a long drive this one, follow the arrow to the EMS badge, then trail behind the ambulance to another EMS badge. An ambulance arrives from the right hand side, this then leads you to the bomb. Make sure you pick up any time badges on the way as you need them to reach the bomb.
Bomb 3: The next bomb is a red sports car, follow the police cars to roughly the same area as the bomb then look at the radar and follow the red line to find where it is parked.
Bomb 4: Once the red sports car has been destroyed follow the blue line on the radar to find a Ferrari.



Launch pads often save loads of time, so use them where you can. Here we see John airborne and heading for the bomb. This occurs quite a lot throughout the game.

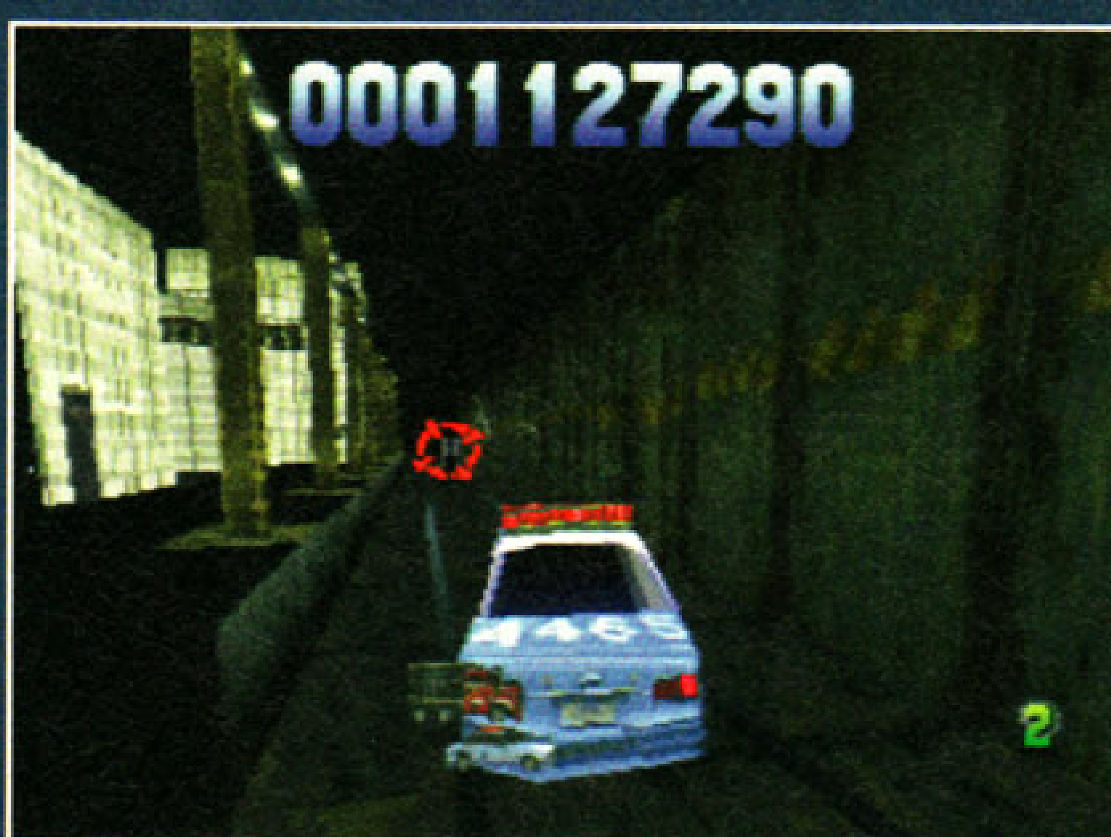
Once you have the dream machine, hot tail to the bomb. Collect any time shields you see as time is not on your side. The bomb is found next to a set of police barriers.
Bomb 5: Time for full speed now as time is running out and the next bomb is lying inside a black car. As you make your way to it several road blocks stand in the way. Don't use a turbo to get through them as they can be easily plough through using the speed of the Ferrari.
Bomb 6: A bomb car next of the Ferrari kind, first it'll head straight towards you, try to hit it head on then quickly spin round and give chase. You must collect the time shields while giving chase as these are your route to success. You must hit the car four or five times in order to destroy it.
Bomb 7: The last bomb is easy to reach, just keep an eye on the radar and hit the trash can in the middle of the road to defuse the bomb.

LEVEL 6: THE SUBWAY (BONUS)

The tunnel forks twice on this subway level. With both forks, take the right hand side as on the first fork you're able to collect an extra life. Take the right hand fork the second time round to locate the bomb.







LEVEL 7: FINANCIAL DISTRICT

Bomb 1: As soon as the level begins a bomb car must be captured before it explodes. This time it's a white Porsche and it must be rammed four times to stop defuse the bomb. This a very easy chase so you won't have any bother with this one.
Bomb 2: As you make your way to the second bomb a large amount of law enforcement vehicles will be blocking the road. Look out for the launch pad by the road block to avoid the cars. After the launch turn left to find the bomb.
Bomb 3: The next bomb is situated between two grassy areas. Along the way you'll see time and point shields spread over various roads. Follow the shields as best you can then once you hit the EMS shield, stay close to the ambulance as it leads you to the bomb.
Bomb 4: The next bomb is easy to find, let the arrow on the radar point the way. Hit the launch pad to jump over the large truck near the bomb then it's on to the next.
Bomb 5: Blimey, two bomb cars this time, the first is a truck the second is a BMW. I advise that you go for the truck first as this is the slowest and easiest to destroy. Each vehicle needs to be struck four times in order to stop them blowing the city to pieces. If you look at the radar you'll see that there is a new car available, this is a Porsche so go for it and get those bomb cars.
Bomb 6: McClane must now quickly get to a taxi armed with a bomb before it moves off. Use the roads that have streams of point and time shields then use the launch pads to clear the road blocks. The taxi is found near the park area.
Bomb 7: Quickly spin the car around and head for the old car wreck in the middle of the street. It is a very short drive but you have only a few seconds to reach it.



LEVEL 8: CENTRAL PARK 2

Bomb 1: At the start of the level drive straight on and hit the bench located just to the right.
Bomb 2: Head right, over the grassy area and hit the telephone box surrounded by police vehicles. Pick up the time shields between the trees to give yourself a better chance of breaking through the police barricade.
Bomb 3: A chase around the fields now for McClane; follow the bomb car around the woodland while keeping an eye out for time shields. The shields basically marks the route of which the bomb car takes. Hit the car four times then it is on to the next explosive device.





Bomb 4: Quickly spin around and cross over the grass, picking up the extra life on the way. Head for the ring of police cars and hit the digger that contains the bomb.
Bomb 5: Another bomb car to chase here, this car tends to drive in a large circular route. Along the way are many time shields to be collected, keep on the path of these and hit the car four times to proceed to the next challenge.
Bomb 6: Another easy one here, turn around and head for the wide path section. In the middle of it, hit the car containing the bomb.
Bomb 7: Just head right after the last bomb and hit the telephone box that's straight ahead between the trees.
Bomb 8: A hotdog van is the next target here. Stay behind it and keep ramming, then on the large path section head right and collect the time shields. Once you have these head left and get back to the chase, each time you reach this section repeat the process and you should have plenty of time to ram the van.
Bomb 9: To finish off the level, swing the car around and head for the digger surrounded by time shields.





Oi, keep off the grass, man! John oviboulsy thinks it's better to drive around the nature reserves rather than the streets!



LEVEL 9: CHINA TOWN 2

Bomb 1: Take the first road on the left then turbo straight down to find the first bomb.
Bomb 2: Swing the car around and follow the directional arrow to the next bomb. During the drive, collect as many time and point shields as possible. When you hit the road block use a turbo to blast your way through and hit the telephone box.
Bomb 3: Swing the car around and let the pointer lead



the way, look out for time shields placed in various streets. These indicate which way you should go, if you don't collect the time shields you won't have enough time to make it to the bomb.
Bomb 4: Another bomb car to chase here, look out for the time shields scattered along the bomb cars route. Other than that keep tight behind him and smack the car four times to go on to the next bomb.
Bomb 5: If you follow the blue pointer, a school bus is found in this section. Once you have the bus, smash through any road block to reach the bomb.
Bomb 6: Head north straight away for this bomb, check the pointer for which direction you must be heading. Hit the launch pad, turn left and the bomb is yours.
Bomb 7: Chase this bomb car around the streets like you have done for the others, look out for any pick ups and hit the car four times. That is it really.
Bomb 8: A quick drive to the next bomb, follow the pointer and you find the bomb in no time.
Bomb 9: Turn right and head straight for the blocking police cars. Smash through them using a turbo then head for the bomb. You should have plenty of time for this one.









LEVEL 10: THE SUBWAY (BONUS)

There are three forks to this subway route, first take the left side to avoid the oncoming train. Then, on the second fork, take the right-hand path as this leads to an extra life. Finally, drive down the right-hand side again to find the bomb, using a turbo to reach it.

LEVEL 11: HARLEM 2

Bomb 1: As you head for the bomb collect the time shield on the corner of the street, then hit the launch pad to land on the bomb.
Bomb 2: Drive through the car park to avoid traffic, ignore the EMS vehicle and drive straight to the bomb.
Bomb 3: Follow the blue pointer to find a Ferrari, then when have reached the road block caused by large trucks, use a turbo to get through them.
Bomb 4: This devious little bomb car often doubles back on itself leaving you to pull of a few nifty hand brake turns. Keep close behind him, time shields will randomly appear throughout the chase. Pick them up as you'll need them.
Bomb 5: A large amount of black trucks will be blocking the road. The best way to avoid them is to drive on the sidewalk to avoid them and the bomb is just up ahead.
Bomb 6: A very straight forward route to this bomb, but you gonna have to use a turbo to reach it in time. Avoid the cars by driving on the sidewalk.
Bomb 7: First go for the police car as this is the slower of the two. Then head for the red sports car to go on to bomb 8. There are enough time pick ups to finish the level.
Bomb 8: An easy one here, just listen to Zeus's directions and the bomb is yours.

LEVEL 12: THE AQUADUCT (BONUS)

Just the same as the subway levels, but this time you're driving a huge truck in the Aquaducts. Use turbos where you can but save at least one for the last straight. Along the way look out for bonus pick-ups and extra lives, good luck.





Can I ride with you in your BMW? John is getting high on the left.

LEVEL 13: QUAYSIDE

Bomb 1: Head down the train tracks and drive towards the cranes, the first bomb is located in this area.
Bomb 2: You must head for every time icon on this stage as these are the route to success. Follow the pointer towards a pile of police cars, hit the launch pad to reach the bomb.
Bomb 3: An easy one here, just follow the pick-up shields around the docks as these lead to the bomb.
Bomb 4: The chase is on, head through the warehouses and hit the car four times. The pursuit isn't that long so you should not have any bother. Pick up an bonuses you see as time is plenty.
Bomb 5: Follow the pick-ups to the train tracks and hit the set of three launches to reach the bomb.
Bomb 6: Drive to the warehouses and follow the pick ups to a couple of launches. After the second launch, the bomb is straight up ahead.



Here we see the annual aquaduct truck race in full form. Oviously we're last, but a turbo will put a stop to that.

LEVEL 14: THE AQUADUCT (BONUS)

Much the same as the first aquaduct level, it's a race against time to reach the other end of the tunnel. Pick up any shields lying around, then at the launch pads, hit them dead on so your truck clears the road blocks up ahead.





The Quayside levels are the most exciting, they are quite big and the car chases can last ages. Rock and roll, John!

LEVLE 15: QUAYSIDE 2

Bomb 1: The final level is upon us, McClane must now keep up with Simon Gruber's chopper as it flies around the quayside area. As you follow the helicopter, launch pads are scattered around the area, you must hit these, as they will boost you up to hit the chopper. Timing is essential as the chopper is always moving so you have a good chance of missing it. Try to stay as close to the helicopter as possible before you hit the launch pad. Four or five hits and the game is won!

HEXEN GUIDE PART 1

While Hexen doesn't quite meet the standards set by the almighty Exhumed, it's still a damn good blast. Good enough, in fact, for Rich to award it 88% in issue 17. Boasting a unique 'hub' structure to the levels, you'll be needing your puzzle breeches as well as your best fighting chain mail. With this in mind, STEPHEN FULLJAMES has put quill to parchment, and this walk-through is the result. This month we'll reveal the secrets of the first two episodes, the other three come under closer scrutiny next month.

EPISODE 1

THE WINNOWING HALL

You start in a courtyard area in front of a chapel-type building. Enter it, and search for a secret passage, which can be found by breaking the stained glass windows. Head down the steps in the passage, and pull the switch on the left wall to open the sequence of doors. In the next room, walk up to the far wall to lower it, then hit the switch beyond to lower the pillar bearing the Emerald Key. Once you get it, the series of doors start to move, so time your run carefully to get back to the chapel.

Now go back out to the courtyard and open the Emerald door. Hit the switch inside which opens the door leading up to the battlements. At the end is another switch - pull it to open the door to the bell tower. To get into the tower you'll need the Silver key, so look in the cave to find it. As you pick it up, huge crusher things start up. The best technique here is to just run for the exit. Open the tower and run up to the bell at the top. Strike the bell, then return to the chapel, where you'll see that a teleporter has opened. Step into it to warp to a tiny room - the portal ahead ends the level.



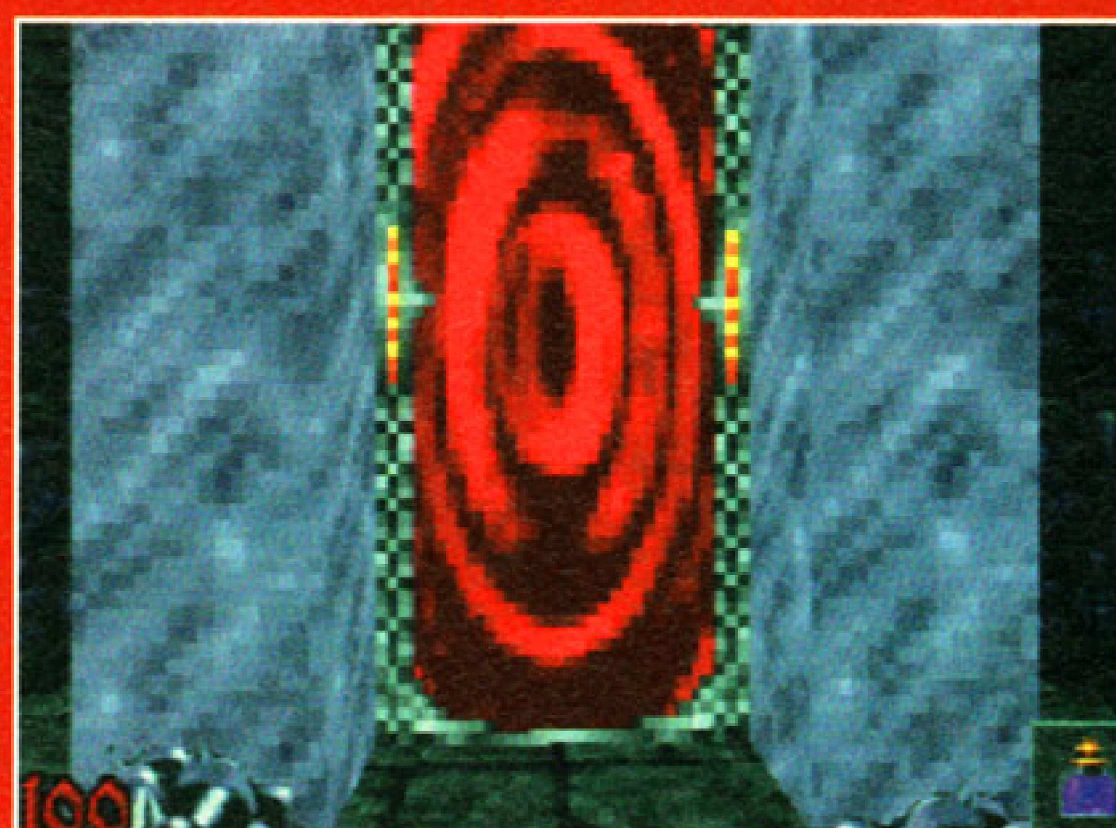








These shots show the sequence of events on the Winnowing Halls level. After getting the Silver key, ring the bell in the Bell Tower to activate the teleporter in the chapel.



THE SEVEN PORTALS

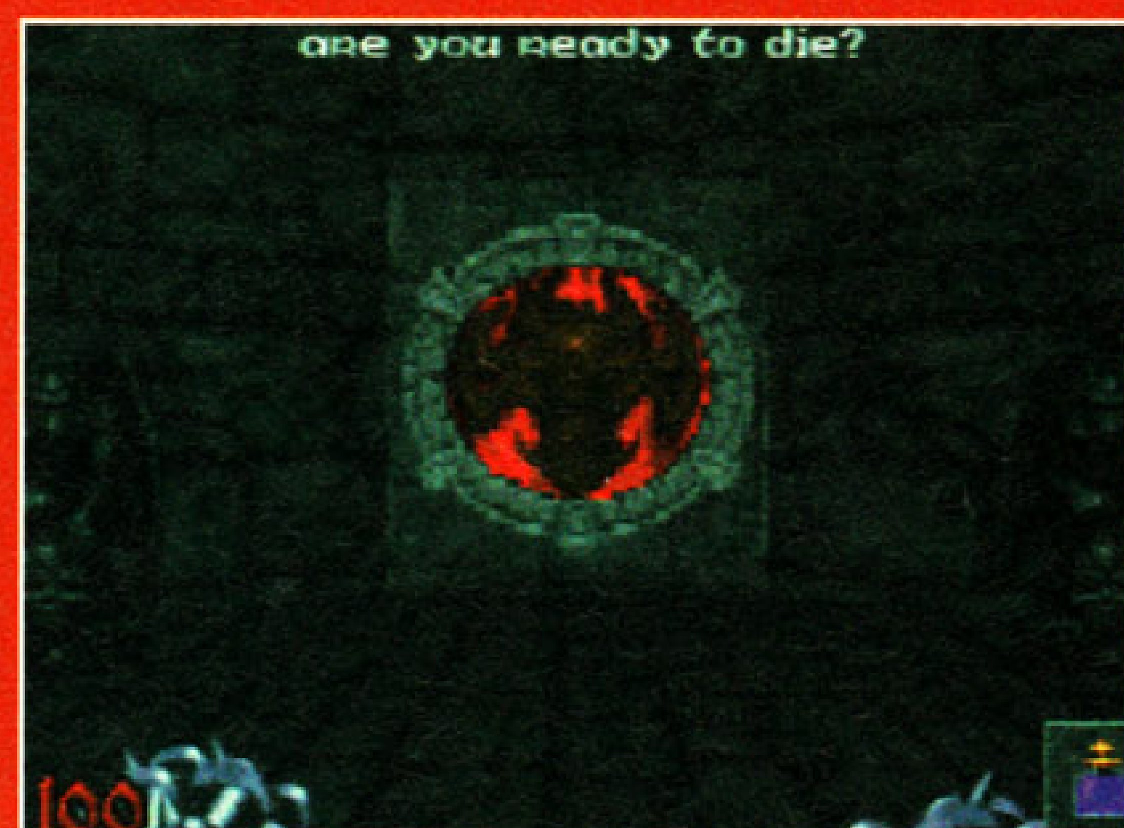
This is the first 'hub' level, with seven sub-levels. After receiving the message from Korax, drop down into the large courtyard. Around the edge of this area are seven doors, numbered 1-7 in a clockwise direction. The first door you can open is number 2, which is unlocked by pulling the switch on the pillar in front of it. Kill the

Chaos Serpents inside, then a quartz flask will appear in front of a window at the far end of the room. Pick up the quartz flask, and two passages at the side will open. A portal will rise in the icy room beyond which leads to the Guardian of Ice.

There are a couple of blocked off passages in this level, so you have to go right to the end, where there is an area with four pillars. Pull the switch on the back wall to activate the pillars, then step onto the one marked with a white arrow - the others crush you. This warps you back to the Seven Portal hub. Now doors 1 and 3 will be open, we'll tackle one first. In the room behind door 1 is a switch - pull it to reveal a portal which leads to the first Guardian of Fire.

Step cautiously into the first room, as the floor around you will collapse and it will fill with lava. Jump across to the doorway on the right, and enter a room with a lava pool. Pull the switch in the alcove on your right, this is part of the puzzle to open door 6 in the Portal hub. Now go down the steps into the area with the lava pillar. Look for an alcove with a mask symbol on it - this is a secret door which leads to a bridge covered in Flechette power-ups. Run across the bridge, the door ahead will close but this ain't a problem. Wait until the screen stops shaking, then jump over to the ledge on your left (facing the door) and walk along it to a passageway with a switch. This opens the door back at the end of the bridge - go through it to pick up the Flame Mask, then jump back onto the ledge and make your way back to the start of the level. Now go through door three, to the Guardian of Steel.

At the start of this level are steps which go up to the left or right. Take either flight and open the door marked with an iron ring. Take the flight of steps leading up from here to the level's central chamber. There



As you enter the Seven Portals, you get these 'spine chilling' words of encouragement from big bad bad guy Korax. He's just a big lizard really, and loves children. Especially on toast.









are two doors here - one of which needs the Steel key. The other door leads to a lift - at the bottom is a passageway. One direction of the passageway will be blocked up, so go the other way and pull a chain switch in the next room. A message says that there is one more switch to go. To get it, return to the room at the start of the level with the iron ring door. There is a switch on the wall here which opens the other way in the previous passage, but bear in mind that there are



Here's the Warrior applying axe to Centaur. This is a common sight in Hexen, packed as it is with diverse types of beasties.



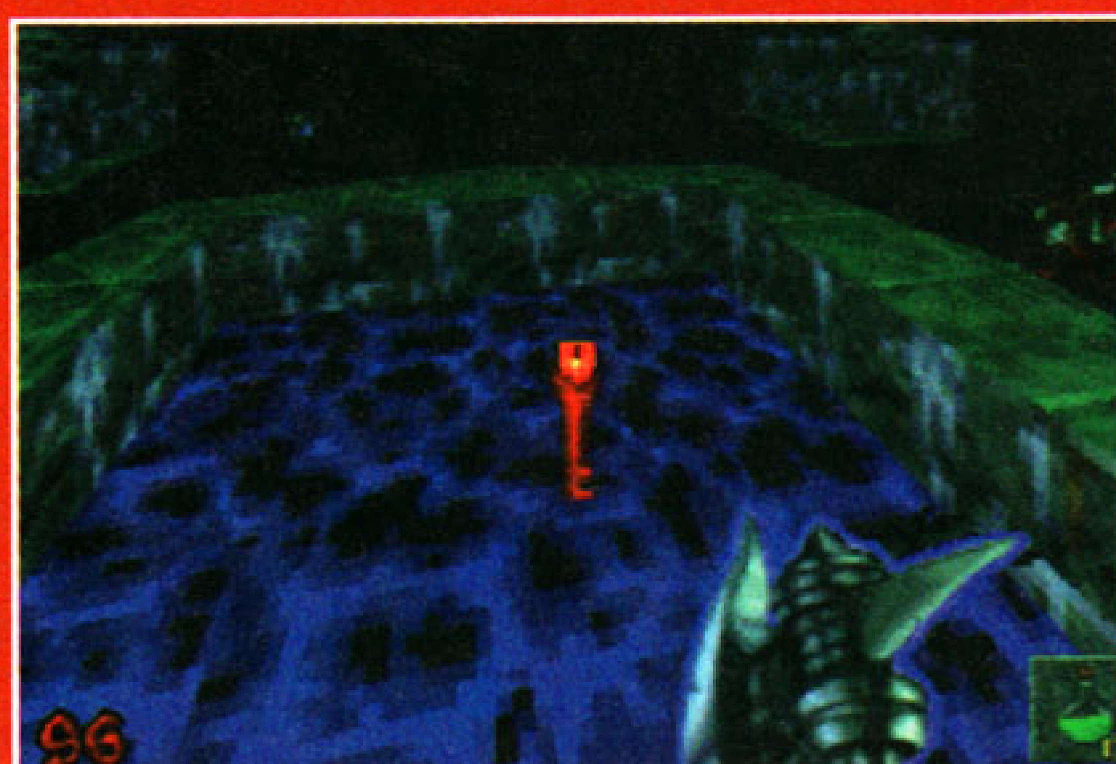
SECRET LEVEL: THE BRIGHT CRUCIBLE

Before you exit the first episode, there is a hidden level to find. We'll explain how to get there, but you can find the way through it yourself. Climbing the stairs in the central area of the Hub triggers two hidden switches - you should see signs saying that doors are opening in the Guardian of Ice, so head there via door 2. Two doors have opened outside the dark room where you enter the Guardian of Ice. Go for the right hand one first.

Go down the stairs on the right and pull the switch. Fireballs start to spew in the pit in the middle of the room. Run up the stairs and jump across the pit to the opposite side. There's a switch the small room here - pull it, and a portal behind this small room will open. Now jump back across the pit and go to the portal, which takes you to a new area in the Guardian of Fire. The wall in front will open as you step in, so go into the room ahead and follow the ledge on the left. Be careful on the way, as there's a wall here that will push you into the lava pit in the middle of the room - run to get past it. Wait a moment and the lava in the pit will rise. Now, go to the pillar in the middle of the room and pull the switch. Jump back to the ledge and exit the room. You'll find yourself in the room with the lava pillar. Now exit the Guardian of Fire and go through the left hand door outside the Guardian of Ice.

Don't rush inside, since as soon as you step in, the traps on the side walls activate. Time yourself carefully (watching the pattern that the balls of spikes are shot across the room) and head for the end of the room. There is an icy room on the left with a pillar in the middle. The other side of the pillar has a switch you should pull, watch out for the trap that is activated as you pull the switch. You need to kill the bad guys that appear before the door of the room opens again. Leave the icy room and you'll see a portal has opened - step in to get to a new area in the Guardian of Steel.

After killing the baddies here, the walls will lower to reveal a larger room. You probably have seen this larger room from the central room in the Guardian of Steel. Unless you're very, very good, don't expect to kill the wendigos in the room, so leg it for the lifts before you get killed! The two lifts take you to the two rooms with the iron ringed doors you explored earlier. Go through the central area to the identical rooms on the other side, and take the lifts there. This will take you to the other area you can see from the central room on this level. This room has a lot of crushers, so time yourself carefully when crossing them. Look for a switch somewhere inside here and pull it. Return to the central room - you'll see that some walls have opened in the area in the centre. Climb inside and grab the torch from the dark pedestal. You'll now get a message that stones are grinding on the Seven Portals. Return there and you'll see that the area behind the highest stairs has opened. Go inside this area and jump into the water. There is an invisible portal here that takes you to the Bright Crucible.



Use the Skull Mask to collect the Lava Key, and watch out for the enemies which burst out of the walls as you do.

two identical rooms with switches in, so if it doesn't work - try the other one! Once you've got to the second chain switch, you have solved the puzzle to access door six in the Hub. So go there. NOW!

Kill the Chaos Serpents behind door six and collect the quartz flask which materialises at the end of the room. Picking this up causes two doors to open, go through one to reach an icy area here. Be careful, as the brighter areas of ice are traps which crush you. Go up the steps to an area with a lift. At the top of the lift is a patch of ice which grows into a portal - step into it to travel to another part of the Guardian of Ice.

Go forward into the room in front and pull the switch, which raises stairs in the room you just came from. Go back there and pull the two switches at the top of each of the stairs (this causes the highest flight of stairs in the middle of the Hub to be raised). Now, take the passage that leads to an open area on the left. There's a room on the right. Enter that room, watching out for the traps, and follow the passage up a winding flight of stairs. Pull the switch at the top and take the platform up. Run through the dark area, and you'll find yourself in the part of the level you reached from door two. Go through to the room with the four pillars and you'll see two new bright arrows on the ground pointing at two doors which you can now enter. The door on the right leads to the room with the Fire Key. To get the key, place the Flame Mask on the wall on the far end of the room, which lowers the pillar

with the Fire Key on it. The door on the left leads to a large icy room. Parts of the floor and ceiling will start to move. After a while, a switch appears in the







(Above) Watch your step on the icy areas, as one slip could result in an extremely painful, crevasse related death.







(Above) Two very similar screen shots showing Ettins eating knuckle sandwich. (Bottom) Right at the end of the Seven Portals hub is the first segment of your fourth weapon.

left corner. Pull this switch and the ice will move again. There are now deep crevasses in the floor, so watch your step. Make your way to the next room, where you'll see the Steel Key is resting top of some icy steps. Grab the key and watch out as the ice in this room begins to move. Carefully make your way back to the entrance and get out of the room. Step on the teleport pillar to return to the Hub.

You will now have opened doors five and seven, we'll deal with seven first for no reason other than because we want to. To open the portal behind door seven, kill the bad guys and collect the quartz flask. You'll warp to an area of the Guardian of Fire next to the lava pillar. Now you have the Fire key, you can open the previously locked doors in the alcoves in this room. Both rooms are the same, so it doesn't matter which one you go through. Pull the switch in the next room to drop a platform. Stand on it to take a lift to another lava filled room. Go to the alcove with the fire mask symbol and two passageways will open. They both lead to a series of interconnected passageways, where you'll find a teleporter. You'll warp to a small room with a switch ahead - you need to pull it. Now turn around an activate the wall where you teleported into the room - you'll now warp back to the Hub. Door five next, so get over there sharpish.

Open the portal behind door five in the usual way, then enter the Guardian of Steel for the second time. The area you warp into is almost identical to



My, they're ugly fellows. Fortunately, as the shots below indicate, they die in an amusing assortment of ugly ways too.





where you started last time, but this time it's on the opposite side of the level. However, you now have the Steel Key, so you can get through the locked door in the central chamber. Beyond is a copy of the passage with two chain switches in - so you'll have to fiddle with the switches in the earlier rooms again to reach both. Having done this, all the steps in the central area of the Hub are raised. There is a switch at the top of each flight which must be pulled to open door 4. At the top of the middle flight you'll also find the Dragonskin Bracers.

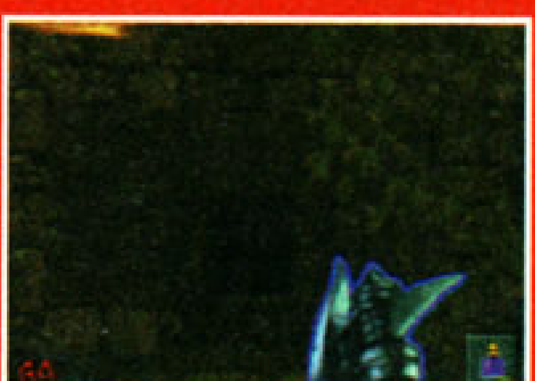
Now go through door four, and kill all the bad guys in the first room. Hit the switch by the large doors to open them, then go through to see the exit portal on the other side of a huge chasm. Kill the centaurs, and a magical bridge, made of blue light, will form across the chasm. Run across to pick up the first part of your fourth weapon, and grab the combined mana from behind the teleport before you exit the level.

EPISODE 2

SHADOW WOOD

First, a little explanation. To complete this level you have to light six panels in the temple near the exit.









Each panel is lit by a switch elsewhere in the level. The panels are split into pairs of two - Swamp, Horn and Cave, so you'll need to find the corresponding keys to reach the switches. To reach the temple and see the six panels, follow the left wall as you come out of the room where you start the level. Go through the doorway on the left and head up the stairs. Go inside the temple, turn right and go to the end of the corridor. Open the metal wall on your left, and go down the corridor behind it. Be careful, as this area is meanie packed. This leads to the room with the six switches and the gate. You haven't solved any puzzles yet, so six panels will be dark. So let's get on with it then.

We'll start with the Horn Key, which is in the Wastelands. Go right as you start the level and you'll find a river. Around this area is a canyon with a deep, deep drop to the right. You need to carefully jump from ledge to ledge. Keep going until you reach the end, where there is a switch. Pull this switch. It opens a wall a few ledges back, so start jumping back. The portal to the Wastelands is behind the wall, and another wall opens leading back to the main area in Shadow Wood.

In the Wastelands, go down the steps and through the short tunnel. Now take the descending passage on the left. At the bottom you'll be in an open area, now enter the tunnel on the left, and turn right at the fork. As you go on, watch for an exit to the right - you may miss it if you're not looking. This exit leads to an area with a closed portal and a blocked teleport. You need the Cave Key to open these two - so for the time being, continue down the tunnel, keeping an eye on the left wall. Somewhere along the way you'll see an alcove. The back wall is a revolving door, so open it up and step through. Go up the winding path to a big open area. Turn sharp right and you'll find a narrow walkway with lava on both sides. Go to the end of the walkway and you'll find the Horn Key. Once you get the key, the walkway breaks into pillars, so you'll have to jump from pillar to pillar all



(Above) Activate the extinguished torches to open the adjacent door. (Below) On the left of this room you can see some of the six panels which must be lit in order to complete the level.



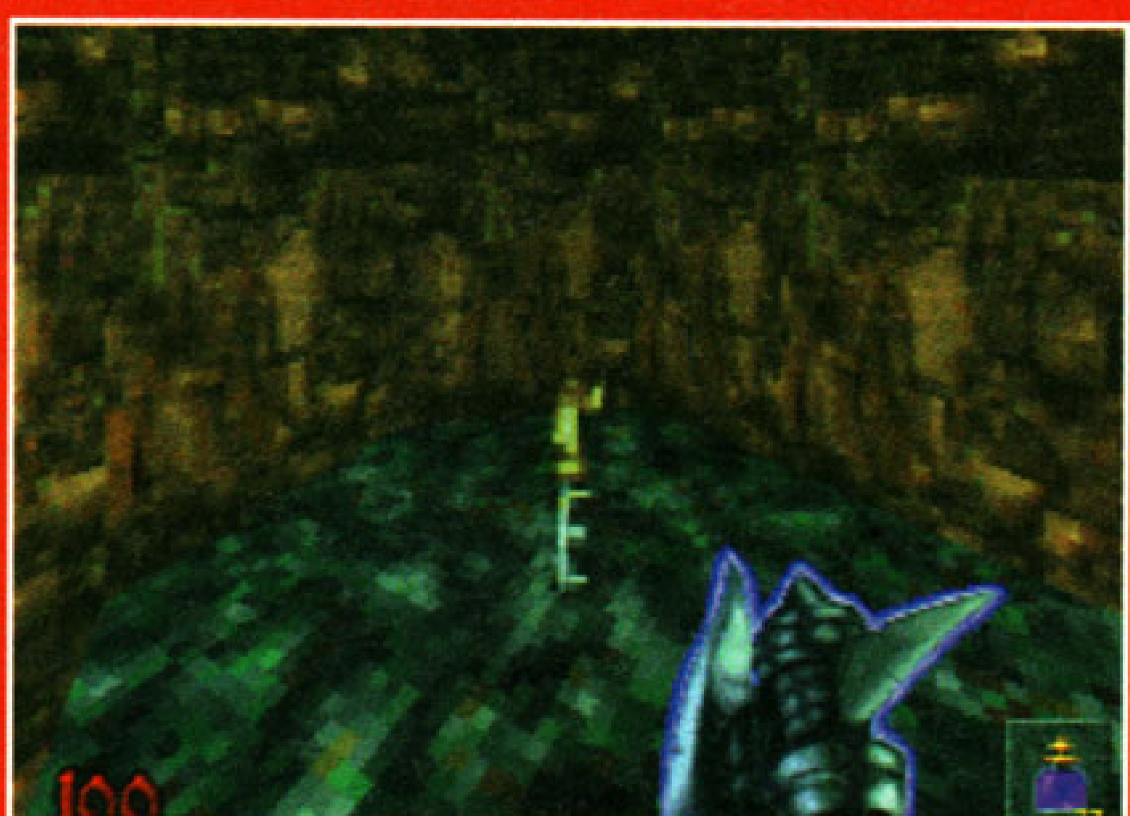


the way back. If you ever fall into the lava, follow the walkway back to the beginning and pull the switch. This lowers a platform to get you out. Now retrace your steps through the tunnel and return through the portal to Shadow Wood.

Now go to the river in Shadow Wood, and walk downstream. Carry on until you reach metal bars that block your way. There are stairs to the left which lead up to a high cliff with a green swamp below. There is a tower in the middle of the swamp - run and jump onto the base of the tower and pull the switch there. This raises several metal pillars on the sides of the swamp. Your third weapon is also located here. Now jump into the swamp and look for a switch on the wall. Pull this switch, which opens the bars blocking the river, so now you can get back to the river tunnel. Climb up the stairs again, but this time turn left and jump on the pillars you just raised. These pillars lead to a high area where the chaos serpents were firing at you earlier. Don't panic if a poison dart hits you - it's almost unavoidable. There's a switch on the high area that raises a lift to the top of the tower. Jump down to the base of the tower and climb up to pull the switch. Now the portal beside the swamp is open. This portal takes you to the Darkmere.



(Top left) Another 'threat' from Korax (Above) An exciting, narrow passage. Where could it lead? What a lame caption.



Here's the Horn key, which allows access to two of the six panel switches on the Shadow Wood hub. Grab it you fools.





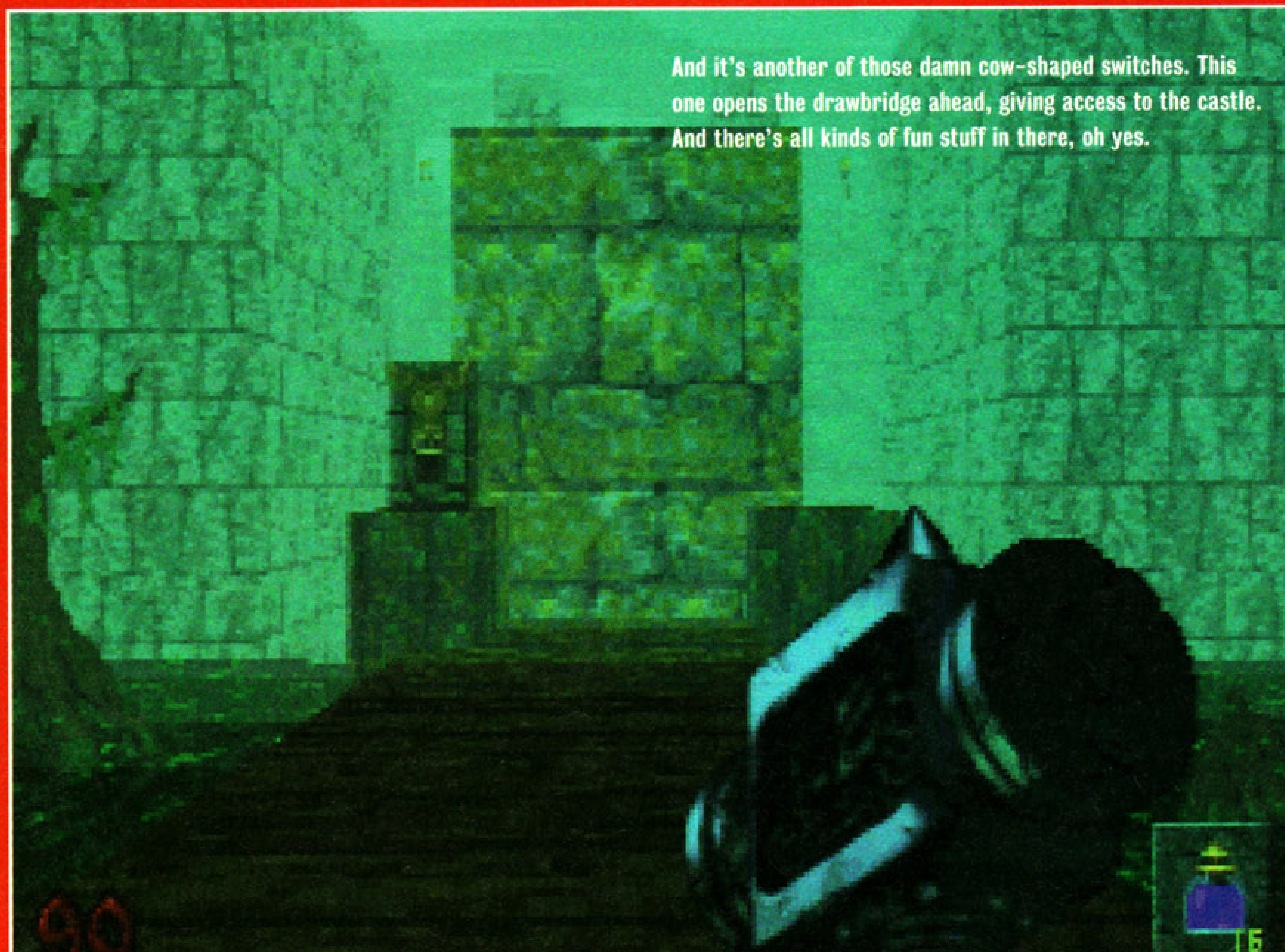
This peculiar cow-shaped switch raises the pillars just visible in the background. This allows you to reach the other cow-shaped switch...



...on the battlements. This switch raises a moving platform back down in the swamp which, in turn, allow you to reach, wait for it...



...yet another cow-shaped switch. Pulling this one opens the portal to Darkmere, one of the sub-levels. Moooo!



And it's another of those damn cow-shaped switches. This one opens the drawbridge ahead, giving access to the castle. And there's all kinds of fun stuff in there, oh yes.

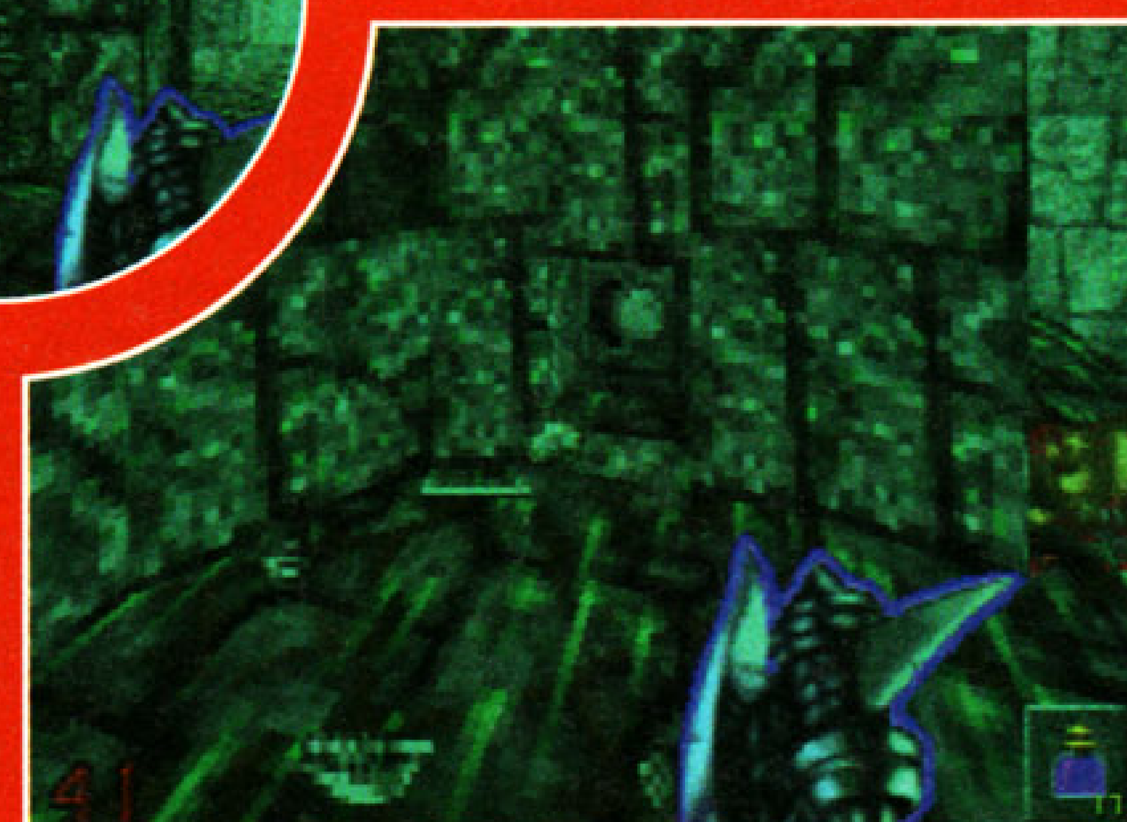
Smash down the rotten trees in front of you when you first enter the Darkmere. Enter the building and go to the room flooded with muck. Now, look for a set of torches which are not alight. Activate them, which open the adjacent door. Now pull the switch behind this door, and the other door in the room will open. Enter this door and go left. At the end of the corridor, open the door and activate the switch inside. Now go back toward the muck room and take the left corridor. The first switch has opened a room here, so go inside and activate the switch. Now go along the last corridor which leads outside to the swamp. Go into the porch of the small building here, and activate the switch inside there. If you look into the rest of the building, you'll see the Castle key. To get it, go back outside and follow the current of the swamp until you reach a big open area with a castle. Be careful here, as the current will pull off the edge of a huge chasm. Go to the front of the castle and pull the switch. This lowers the bridge into the castle. Go inside the courtyard, and go left past the stairs to a door. The room behind here contains a well. Jump in and activate a switch. This raises the water level so that you can get out again, and at the same time, it opens the door in the small building with the Castle Key - go get it and then return to the castle. Climb up the tower and open the door on the left. There is a hidden switch inside - see if you can find it! This switch opens the door to the lower level of the castle. Go down the steps in the courtyard to the lower level of the castle and carry on until you get to what looks like a dining room. In the second fireplace on the right is a switch. Pull it to open the wall at the back of the alcove, then head up the steps and through the Horn door. A flight of steps in this area leads up to one of the six switches you need to activate to complete the level. Now return to the dining room and activate the wall at the back. A secret passage will be revealed - go along it and pull the switch at the end. This lowers an elevator that takes you to the room with the Swamp Key. As you approach the key, walls will rise and block you, and the masks on the wall starts shooting poison darts. You can't avoid getting hit by the darts, so just run as fast as you can along the zig-zag walls to get the swamp key. The walls will rearrange to form three rows; two have fireballs spewing from the ground, and the other contains the poison darts trap. One of these rows is the one you must run through to get out - if you run through the other two rows, you'll be teleported back to where the Swamp Key was. The correct row is picked at random, so good luck. Now return to the Shadow Wood hub, using the portal beside the small building with the Castle key.

Go to the temple in Shadow Wood, and into the room with the six panels. If you look at the map, you'll notice that there are two passages that lead to this room from the front of the temple. Go down the left hand passage, and walk up to the black mask there. This activates a load of traps in the temple, and also raises stairs in the front corridor. Run back to the front corridor and go up the new set of stairs.To avoid falling off end of the steps, run into the opening on the right at the top of the stairs. This goes into the room where the chaos serpents are which overlooks the room with the six panels. Go to the centre of the room and look for a small manhole. Jump inside and pull the switch. Now, go back to the opening at the top of the stairs where you came in. The switch you just pulled has lowered the stairs down below ground level. Jump









(Clockwise from top left) Step through the portal into Darkmere, then fight your way through to the castle; Inside, find the room with the well, down at the bottom is a switch; Which opens the door to the Castle key; letting you reach this secret switch.



This would be the Swamp key, then. It's green and, er, swampy. And that's about all there is to say about it. Great.





down and go to the bottom of the steps. Pick your way carefully through the next room - stay close to the left hand wall and you should be okay, until you reach a passage which leads to a portal to the Caves of Circe.

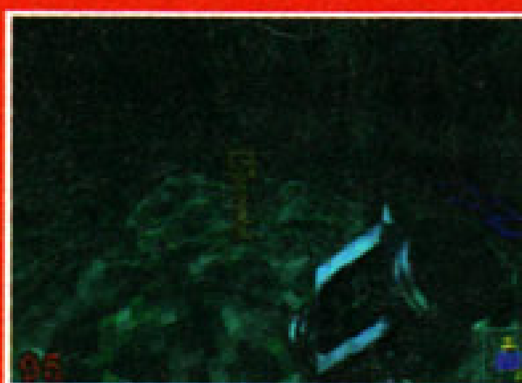
First off, turn right and jump down the hole with bats flying out. Now you will be in a cave with three exits. Take the left one first, which leads to a cave where you can see the sky through the big crack in the ceiling. Turn right here and jump into the hole at the end of the passage. You'll land in a small cave with a pool. Step into the water to open the wall ahead. Go through here and turn right, then take the first left. You'll now be a cavern with the Cave key. Pick it up, then look for a passage ahead that goes upwards. This passage leads to a cave with a platinum helmet, but you'll have to be very, very fast if you want to grab it. There's a fast-flowing river on the left. In the river is a door with a Swamp Key lock. Open it and climb up the passage inside. Take the first tunnel on the left, which leads to a room with the puzzle

switch. Now make your way back to the cave with the skylight, but this time go straight to the end of the cave and follow the passage. Look for a partially hidden exit on your left. Climb up the narrow steps, and open the door at the top with the Horn Key.

There's a portal inside here that takes you to the Wastelands. The second puzzle switch is on the wall beside the portal.

Now go through the portal to the Wastelands, and head for the tunnel you went down earlier to get the first key. This time, take the left fork at the first junction, then take the next left. You should be in a room with a Cave key symbol on one wall. Open this wall and go down the passage to a room with a lava lake. Kill the bad guys and a magic bridge will appear. Climb up the bridge, taking care at the turns, and enter the the room at the top where you'll find a pull the puzzle switch. Now exit the lava cave and turn left at the top of the steps, then follow the cave round to the right until you reach an open area with high ledges on both sides.

Now enter the tunnel dead ahead. Along the way, you'll see a grey tunnel on the left. If this is not









(Above) These helpful messages show you that I've solved two sixths, or a third if you like, of the Shadow Wood puzzle.

open yet, go kill some ettins. We're not sure quite how many you have to kill, but the door will open eventually. Go through the newly revealed tunnel and take the right fork - the left tunnel leads to a ledge with a Krater of Might on the ledge. Now you'll be in a long, winding path which ends up by a large swampy area. Go to the far end of the swamp and climb up the stairs, then open the door at the top with your Swamp Key. Go inside and pull the switch in the farthest room. This opens a large temple-like area near the swamp. Go up the stairs here to the main door in this area and open it. Go behind the portal inside, and you'll find a puzzle switch. The portal here takes you to the Darkmere.

Go to the courtyard of the castle in the Darkmere. Open the door that needs the Cave Key. Pull the switch inside and take the elevator up, then jump down into the muck. Now, follow the passage and take the right hand tunnel when it forks. This right tunnel will lead to a cavern with many exits. Most of the passages lead to impassible pits - don't try to jump them, as you can't do it. One of the passages leads to a portal, but before you step into it, find the the puzzle switch which is somewhere along the passage. Now step into the portal to go the Caves of Circe. Take the first left and step into the portal here to return to Shadow Wood. You have now found all six puzzle switches, so the exit door in the Shadow Wood temple will be open (at last). Go through and step into the portal to travel to the Hypostyle.

THE HYPOSTYLE

The main room of the Hypostyle has a four-pointed star in the middle. One of the points will be raised - this points to which room you should enter next. Note that the order that the rooms are opened is random, so you must always follow where the star points. There are four possible rooms: The Serpent Room is full of chaos serpents. Go to the far end of the room, and activate the switch there. Come back to the door - which closed when you entered the room, and pull the switch in front of it. This returns



Just what I always wanted, a caption on a bit of artwork. I should draw your attention to the 'amusing' warning on it.



One of the Horn Key doors which leads to a panel switch.









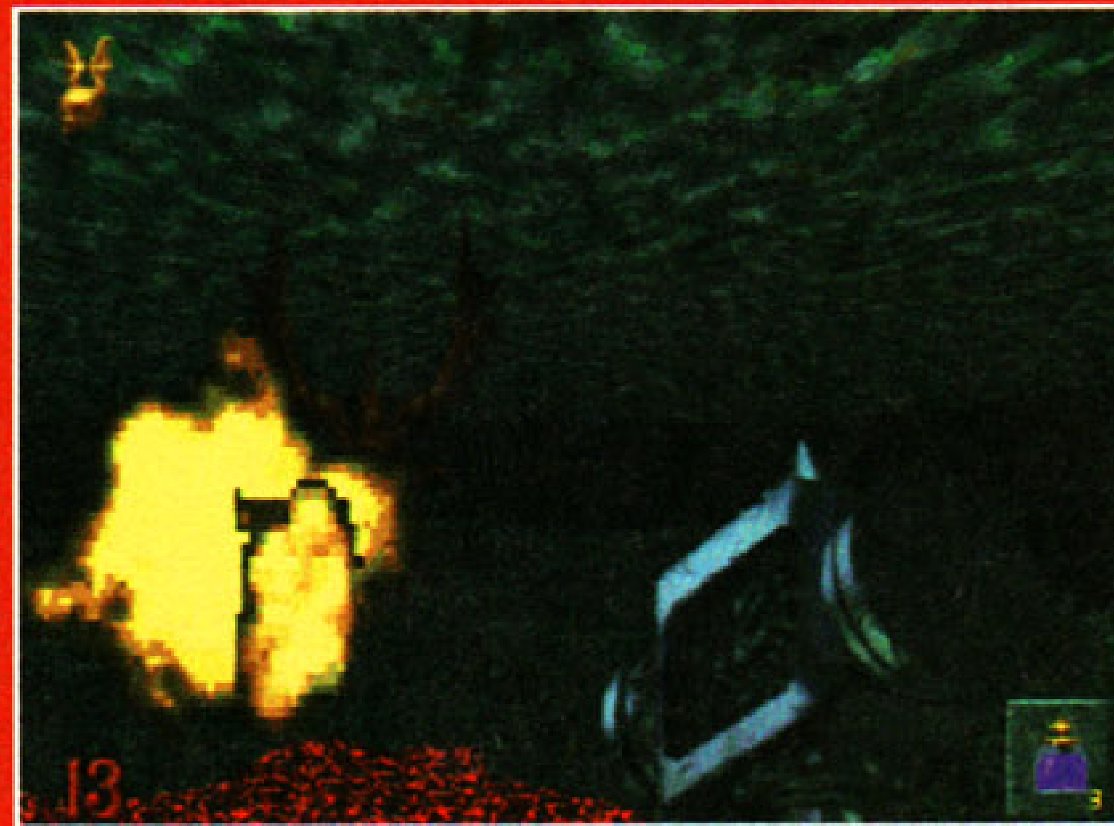


(Above) Four exciting pictures of a Hammer, posing in front of doors, switches and magical light bridges. Nice.



(Above) And here's the second segment of Quietus. The segment is in a different room depending on your chosen character.





you to the central room, so look at the star to find out where this next room is. If you're playing the Warrior, the second part of your fourth weapon is in this room.

The Centaur Room is full of meanies and crushing pillars. Go to the left side of the room and press the switch behind the wall. Now go to the right side and press the switch behind the wall there. Now go to the end of the room and press the switch there. This lets you out of the room and opens the next room. If you're playing the cleric, the second part of your fourth weapon is in this room.



An all-action shot showing a Hammer-based projectile heading in the direction of yonder Ettin. That's gonna hurt.

The Lava Room has a load of moving pillars over a lava lake. You can jump from pillar to pillar to get to the end of the room where the switch is, or go down the steps to the edge of the lava, and wait until the last pillar is almost fully down. Run across the lava and get on the pillar before it rises out of reach. Now you can jump to the ledge with the switch. This switch lets you out of the room and opens the next room. If you're playing the mage, the second part of your fourth weapon is in this room.

The Bridge Room is initially full of lava. When you enter the room, press the switch on your left, then look in the alcove to your right. Remember the symbol, then cross the bridge and activate the panel with the same symbol. This opens the door of the room, and selects the next room to be entered. The symbol is randomly picked, so check it each time you play this level.

Once you've completed all four rooms, none of the four points on the star in the centre of the Hypostyle will be raised. Two doors on the southeast and southwest side of the Hypostyle will be open. Both lead to a large chamber with a lava lake. Before you enter, get your best weapons ready! You will now face the wrath of the Death Wyvern. Be careful of the ground where the fire-breath of the Wyvern hits, because his fire has secondary explosions which occur after one or two seconds after the initial impact - this can be deceiving because the explosions from the initial impact may have finished and the ground looks safe, but a second later, it will explode in flames again. You'll get burned if you step on the ground too quickly. The safest bet is to wait three or four seconds before stepping on that part of the ground again. There's a pair of Wings of Wrath on the ledge on the far side of the lava lake, if you grab them you can then fly around to chase the Death Wyvern. If you're good enough, you can always keep behind it so that you won't get hit. After you kill the Death Wyvern, the portal on the southwest of the

Hypostyle will be open. This takes you to episode three. If you want to go to the secret level in the current episode, enter the portal on the southeast, which takes you back to Shadow Wood.

SECRET LEVEL: SACRED GROVE

Go outside the temple on Shadow Wood, where there is a high rocky place. There are tall steps here that lets you climb to a high ledge near the top of the rocky place. Just before you reach the top, there's an opening to the right - the portal to the Sacred Grove is inside there. Note that there is a switch in the Sacred Grove which must be pulled if you want to visit the hidden level on episode four.

As before we're going to let you work through the level yourself - the actual Hexen quest is what we're providing a walkthrough for.



Is that a mystic artifact I see before me? Indeed.





Blood. Guts. Everywhere! Ahahahahahaha!









COIN-OPERATED

While the future of Sega's arcade titles may lie with the power of Model 3, there's still life left in the Model 2 board yet. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE straps on its novelty safety pads and helmet and prepares to surf concrete!

The recent AOU Amusement Expo, held in Tokyo earlier this year, saw a number of exciting arcade products being unveiled for the first time. While many of these were merely upgrades of existing titles (DarkStalkers 3, Virtua Striker 2) there were certainly plenty of innovative coin-ops on show. With skiing and snowboarding games enjoying a wave of popularity at the moment it should have come as no surprise then to learn that Sega's AM3 division had been busy developing a similar themed game. As the name suggests, Top Skater attempts to simulate the adrenalin-charged feeling of skateboarding complete with "deck", allowing players to Ollie and Kick-Flip with the best of them.

Top Skater is powered by Sega's trusty Model 2 arcade board which provides incredible speed and polygon handling, two criteria essential for accurately portraying the (potential) breakneck nature of this popular sport. In an effort to further enhance the game's sense of realism, the six selectable characters and two playable tracks have the been plastered with promotional stickers and logos from such notable skating companies as Airwalk and Vans.

The main aim of the game is simple enough: to be the coolest skateboarder possible. All you have to do is to select either the Beginner or Expert course and then choose from one of the six available players. After racing around the courses attempting as many tricks as possible, players will soon get the hang of the game's user-friendly controls and smooth board response. As Top Skater utilises a skateboard peripheral, the actual control method certainly takes some getting used to. By moving and dipping the board, players are able to pull off all manner of cool stunts and tricks including such classics as 50-50s, Ollies and Tail Grabs.

TOP SKATER™
SEGA SKATEBOARDING

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

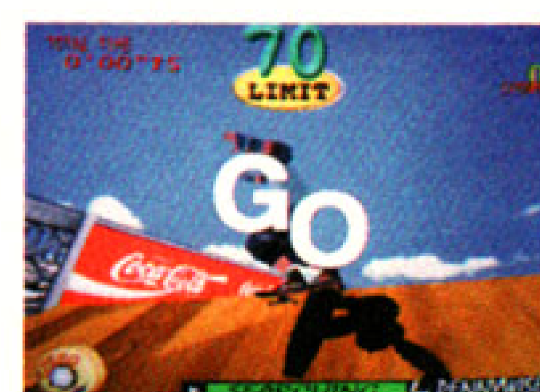
During the game you earn points by travelling around the course and doing tricks. In addition, there are also a variety of obstacles on the course as well including metal drums, cones, railings and low walls. Not only can you jump over them to avoid collisions but by bouncing off the top of the drums and sliding along the top of railings you can get extra points.

However, most of your tricks are done when you jump off the ramps. Depending on your control of the skateboard you can do different tricks, earning you different point scores depending on their difficulty. In addition, as you get closer to the edge of the ramp, the more trick points you get. However, if you go too far, and go over the edge before you do your trick, you'll crash (Trick-Miss).

As well as the ramps you can also jump off the banks and pipes to do tricks as well. Since there are no opponents to race against, the aim of Top Skater is not to finish the course in the fastest time possible but to do as many cool tricks as you can and still finish within the time limit.

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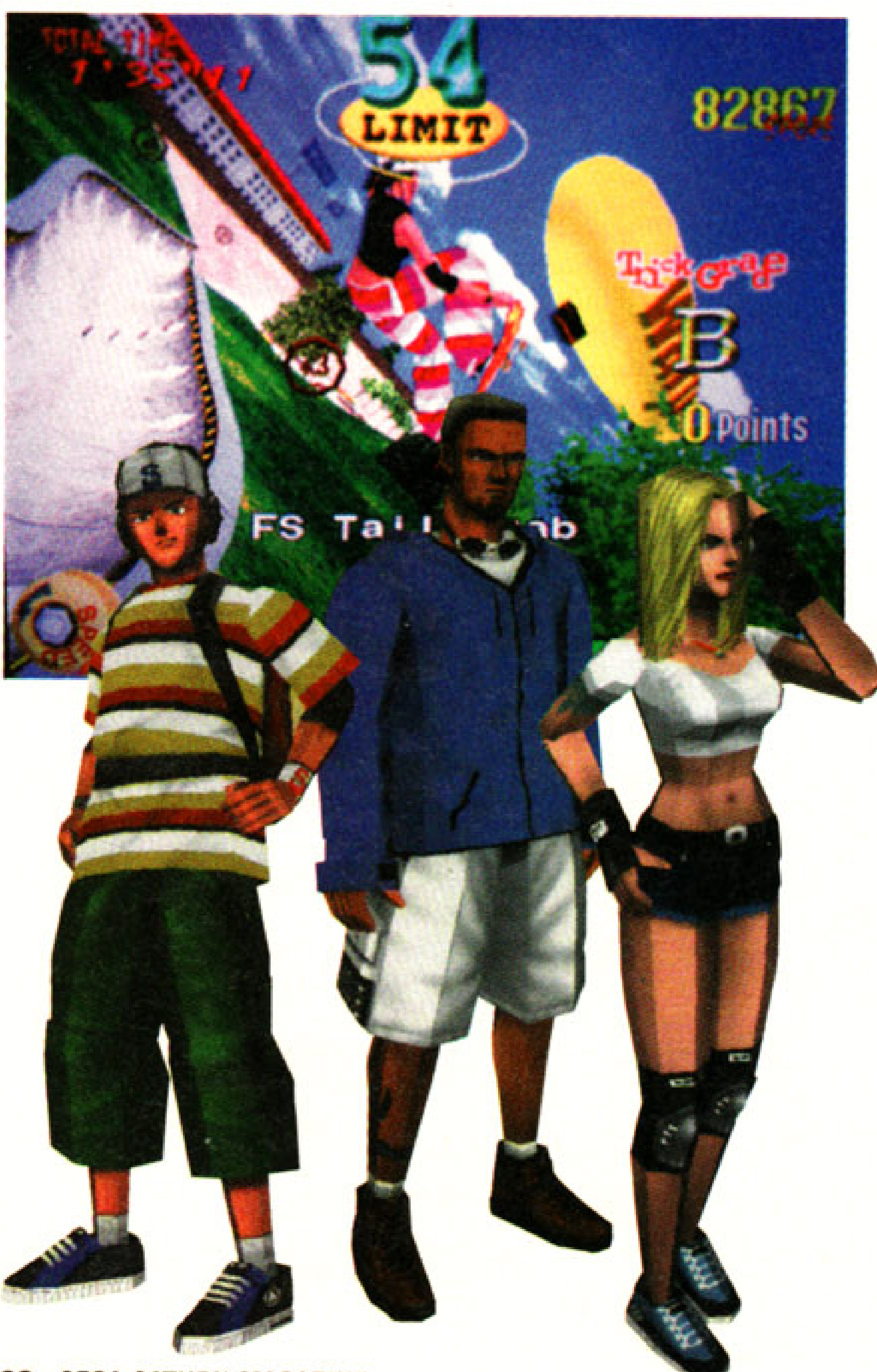




Select one of the "happening" characters and get ready to "do tricks" in Top Skater! Yes!









TIME BONUS

Floating in the air around the courses are "Time Bonus" rings. If you make contact with the rings you can recover a set amount of time. The amount recovered is displayed in the ring as, +3, +5, +10 etc. An empty ring has a basic recovery time of +1. In addition you can get a time bonus for doing tricks as well. With this extra time you can then try to do even more tricks.



And we have a winner in our midst!





SIDEWALK SURFIN'

The main skateboard unit has three axis of movement; Roll, Slide and Tilt. With the correct motions it's possible for players to control the skateboard in six directions during the game; left-roll, right-roll, left-slide, right-slide, front-tilt and back tilt.

ROLL: Depending on the degree of the roll, the angle of your curve increases as you travel forwards.
SLIDE: When used in conjunction with the roll, the slide allows you to make even sharper turns.
TILT: The front tilt gives you a small jump (Nollie) and the back tilt gives you a big jump (Ollie).



Fail to do a trick and watch yourself go flying...



Wahoo! The skater performing a pretty spectacular trick!



Yet another innovative AM4 cabinet for this new game!

ON THE RIGHT COURSE

Although there are only two courses to test your skateboarding skills on, each track offers plenty of variety and potential tricks. Novice players will undoubtedly want to make it through the tracks with the minimum of hassle while more experienced skaters will feel more confidant in pulling off flashy tricks. By combining speed and skill, even average players should be able to rack up some impressive scores on either course. As in real life skateboarding, taking chances and attempting over-ambitious stunts are more likely to earn you higher scores.

#1 Skater's Session (Beginner Course)

This competition is held four times a year (each season) and is open to all levels of skill from from amateur to professional. This long course is on a West Coast beach. and the track clocks in at a massive 3,506 metres. The event is held over three days with those qualifying in a day's event proceeding to the next day.

#2 Stunt Tracker's Trophy (Expert Course)

This competition is held only once a year. Only the number one skaters from around the world participate on this course which takes place at night in the city area. Although the track is only 2,990 metres long it is still a big course considering it's difficulty rating. Held over two days, this course is for those only really to be attempted by those who have mastered the Skater's Session competition.



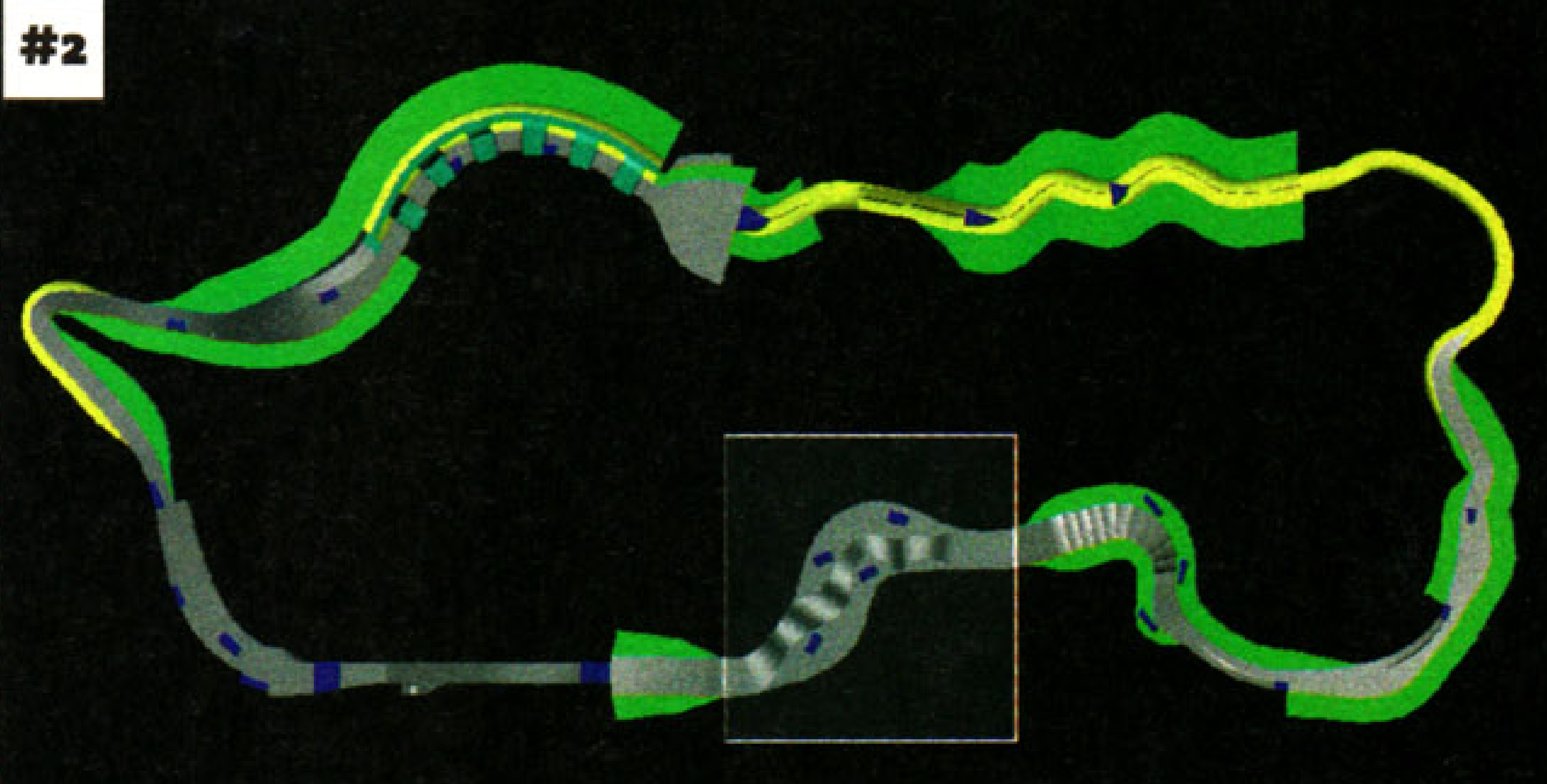


Hmmm... not much in the way of aerial trick potential here.



A successful trick in action!





CHARACTER PROFILES



NICKNAME	Ken-ta
NAME	Kenta Kuhara
SEX	Male
AGE	15
SPONSOR	AIR WALK

BACKGROUND: Ken-ta is the kind of guy who stands out from the crowd and he really wants all the young girls to lavish their attentions on him. He hopes that by winning the competition he can become the "King of Skaters" and thus become even more popular with women.



NICKNAME	Jill
NAME	Jill Hynde
SEX	Female
AGE	20
SPONSOR	REEF

BACKGROUND: Jill is a cool and sexy lady who loves speed and thrills. At the moment she really wants to buy a new car and some custom parts so that she can tune it up. Although she's not particularly interested in being the number one skater she's participating in the competition for the prize money!



NICKNAME	Keith
NAME	Keith Frehly
SEX	Male
AGE	22
SPONSOR	A.D.ONE

BACKGROUND: Keith is a laid-back and cool nice guy with an unimaginative nickname. The only things that are important to him are punk rock and skateboarding. He's heard that "Pennywise" are going to participate in the competition and he secretly wants their autograph.



NICKNAME	J
NAME	Jake Smith
SEX	Male
AGE	27
SPONSOR	ETNIES

BACKGROUND: Jake is a bit of a tough guy who can't help pulling a smile. He believes that he is God's gift to skateboarding tricks and as such he's a real power-skater! His purpose for entering the competition is to win some medals to show just how good his tricks are. Well here's where we find out.



NICKNAME	Cookie
NAME	Dorothy Sambora
SEX	Female
AGE	16
SPONSOR	'ES

BACKGROUND: Cookie is a very charming skater who's madly in love with her older brother's friend (who's a skateboard pro no less!). She's going to compete in the competition so that she can grab his attention and try to be praised by him for her skateboarding skills.



NICKNAME	Ash
NAME	Athlann McKinley
SEX	Male
AGE	19
SPONSOR	VANS

BACKGROUND: Ash is an independent minded, free spirited teenager. He believes that he is the number one skateboarder so he's entering the competition just to prove it. The thing is, with his skills, talents 'n' tricks, he could well be right...

Top Skater is truly one of the best arcade games we've had the pleasure of playing in quite a while. To begin with you might think that it isn't so cool, but when you see a master in action at the controls you won't believe how deep and indeed how brilliant this game is to play!









RADICAL TUNES

Providing the game's thumping soundtrack are US rockers Pennywise. The group started up as a punk band in the latter half of the 80s. Their album "Bad Religion" on an Indie Label had a major following with surfers at that time. After that, they signed up with Epitaph and released their Debut Album "Pennywise" in '91, their second album "Unknown Road" in '93, and "About Time" in '95. Their latest album "Full Circle" was released this year. The band have now gained a large following amongst the boarding communities. Top Skater contains tunes from all their albums and one original track!



© Photo by:Craig Cameron Olson / Epitaph Records.



Nose grab eh? A trick inspired by the antics of Rentaghost?

SATURN SKATERS?

While there's certainly every possibility that Top Skater may appear on the Saturn some time in the future, Sega are obviously remaining tight-lipped regarding any possible home conversion. One of the main stumbling block would undoubtedly be how to overcome the game's unique control method? Fortunately, the Saturn's analogue pad should be more than capable of handling the required smooth motion of the coin-op's skateboard peripheral and, as Manx TT showed, the accuracy of this joypad would be essential for attempting the game's many stunts and tricks. For more on what could be the coolest arcade sports game of the year, make sure you check out next month's Coin-Operated as SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will be bringing you an exclusive interview with Top Skater's creators, the supremely talented AM3!





OUT NOW

CRYPT KILLER
BY KONAMI £44.99 46%

The Virtua Gun gains yet another compatible title with the release of this conversion of Konami's sprite-based target shooter. Crypt Killer was only a minimal success in the arcades and that was down to the novelty gun on the cabinet - a great pump action shotgun! The actual game itself is noisy and cheesy and certainly doesn't stand up to the likes of Virtua Cop 2... so you can imagine how it fares in the form of a home videogame.

Crypt Killer retains the noisiness and cheesiness of the arcade original but also looks excessively ugly on a home screen... and without the shotgun any fun you might have with the game instantly disappears. And unlike say Virtua Cop 2, there is little to bring you back to the game once it is completed (which isn't exactly hard).

Indeed, the only amusement we gleaned from this game was its name in Japan, the sinister-sounding "Henry Explorers".

Crypt Killer provided minimal laughs in the arcades when you stumped up 50p for the privilege of playing it. At this price it's outrageously bad "value".



NBA LIVE '97
BY EA £44.99 67%

Another EA Sports title, another clear (perhaps blatant) PlayStation port. When EA is good, it's really good - witness Soviet Strike which is superior to the PS game - but when EA's bad, they produce some really average games.



And NBA Live '97 is such a case.

On the plus side, EA have outdone themselves with the presentation (as usual) including a really helpful menu you can pull up to explain the myriad options at will. It also makes excellent use of the NBA license, so everything is present and correct when it comes to that side of things.

But for me, the real crux of the matter has to be gameplay and in this regard, NBA Live just doesn't do it for me. The 3D graphics might look quite realistic, but the jerkiness of the update makes keeping up with the ball near impossible. Bang goes the playability. And with that, the interest in this particular product.

EA Sports reached yet another high with the recent John Madden '97 but some bucking up of ideas is required here I fancy...

BOMBERMAN
BY HUDSONSOFT £44.99 90%



Bomberman first materialised on NEC's classic PC Engine console in 1990 and has since progressed to just about every console going from NES through to Megadrive... and beyond! Now Bomberman arrives on Sega Saturn and the same simple formula remains as fresh and addictive as ever. The object of this game is very simple: plant bombs and hope that enemy sprites (or other human-controlled Bombermen) plunder into the explosions leaving you victorious. The scenery is used to guard yourself from the various bomb blasts and is also blown away to reveal power-up icons. The (really) good news regarding Bomberman is the sheer excellence of the multi-player options. Using two multi-taps it is possible to have a simultaneous ten-player game, and Bomberman makes great use of the Saturn's high-resolution graphics to make all of this possible. Look, the bottom line is it's Bomberman and it's ace - a game that has never been copied and never been surpassed in terms of spectacular multi-player action!







SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2
BY CAPCOM £TBA 86%

It's always a joy to review a Capcom game. The Japanese company goes from strength to strength, cornering the market when it comes to 2D brilliance (and maybe the 3D market too when Resident Evil finallty appears). Perhaps when it comes to their Saturn wares, Capcom have limited themselves to their arcade games a bit too much, but they've shown a bit of diversity by releasing this cool puzzler.

The gameplay is very Columns-esque with a healthy dose of Baku Baku Animal added in for good measure, but Capcom have quite cunningly added in characters from their award-winning fighting game franchises. So yes, for some reason, Ryu, Gouki, Felicia and company have traded in their physical confrontations for more cerebral batting. Yeah, right.



What this does mean is that when you perform a really cool chain, the super-deformed Japanese manga characters produce moves from their respective games. It's a nice effect and some of the graphics are ace.

All in all, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE was very impressed with this excellent title. Certainly not a mainstream release, but very good to see it getting an official release.

RETURN FIRE
BY GT £44.99 80%

Here we are in one of those "greatest games of all-time" scenarios, as yet another brilliant game of yore comes to the Saturn. This time it's the 3DO's finest hour: Return Fire. This is one of the best two-player experiences money can buy. Or at least it was on the PlayStation and indeed 3DO. The basic aim is simply to infiltrate the enemy's camp, steal their flag and then get it back to your base. It sounds simple, but Return Fire's use of four different vehicles (each used to perform different tasks) made the game deep involving and frankly brilliant.



Unfortunately what we have here is clearly a PlayStation/3DO port with very little effort put into it to keep the speed of the Saturn version up. NMS's excellent Mass Destruction showed that the Saturn can handle superior visuals to this at 60 frames per second, but Return Fire is an absolute jerkathon in comparison - especially in the all-important two-player mode.

Don't get us wrong, Return Fire is still good fun (and the one-player mode isn't too jerky), thus the score, but you can't help but detect yet another missed opportunity.

SWAGMAN
BY CORE £44.99 88%

Core Design return to the Saturn with another original game. Swagman is going to be one of those titles you either love or hate. Core have forgone what has given the Saturn the success it has enjoyed (awesome 3D graphics) and returned to the roots of gaming with this 2D overhead adventure title. In many ways, Swagman is highly reminiscent of Zelda and Zombies on the Super NES, albeit with some nods to

the power of 32-bit technology and there's certainly plenty of game in there for you including some two character team-up situations later on. Perhaps the only thing against Swagman is the fact that the theme of the game isn't quite as strong as the 16-bit titles mentioned earlier. Core have strived to come up with a great storyline behind the game but perhaps it's just a bit too convoluted and downright weird to capture the imagination of the average gamer - a shame because this is a cool game.



BLACK DAWN

BY VIRGIN £34.99 86%

Virgin's steady stream of Saturn produce continues with this follow-up to



PlayStation Agile Warrior. This time instead of piloting some stealthy kind of aeroplane, you're at the controls of a high-tech helicopter armed to the teeth with all manner of missiles, cannons and what-have-you.

For this game developers BlackOps have tried to merge the fun of the shoot 'em up with the sophistication and fascination of the flight simulation and in many ways they have succeeded. There are also healthy slices of Soviet Strike style mission structures too, which can't be bad.

Perhaps the game is a bit one-note graphically, but gameplay wise Virgin have done well in taking the ThunderHawk 2 idea a step further with this creditable release. Invesigate further, methinks...

FIFA '97

BY EA £44.99 76%

We know for a fact that a lot of you have been waiting for this one... and after all, why not? On the Megadrive, FIFA was an awesome game. Of course, the game hasn't fared so well in the transistion from 16 to 32-bit. Other companies have muscled in on the EA Sports turf and quite frankly they've done a better job with the technology on offer. It's clear that this is exactly what has happened with FIFA '97. It's playable enough and the full 3Dness of it all is pretty impressive, but unfortunately EA have reckoned without the might of "other" developers - in this case, Sega themselves, with the brilliant WorldWide Soccer '97. Although FIFA delivers in true EA Sports style with its authenticity and its myriad options, where it counts - in the gameplay department - FIFA just doesn't stand a chance against the superior Sega effort. FIFA isn't at all bad as a PlayStation port, but the fact is that it doesn't use the Saturn's technology to any great degree and isn't exactly super-playable... the two highly important qualities that made WorldWide such an outstanding success. Yes the license and pedigree are tempting, but this is a lacking game...

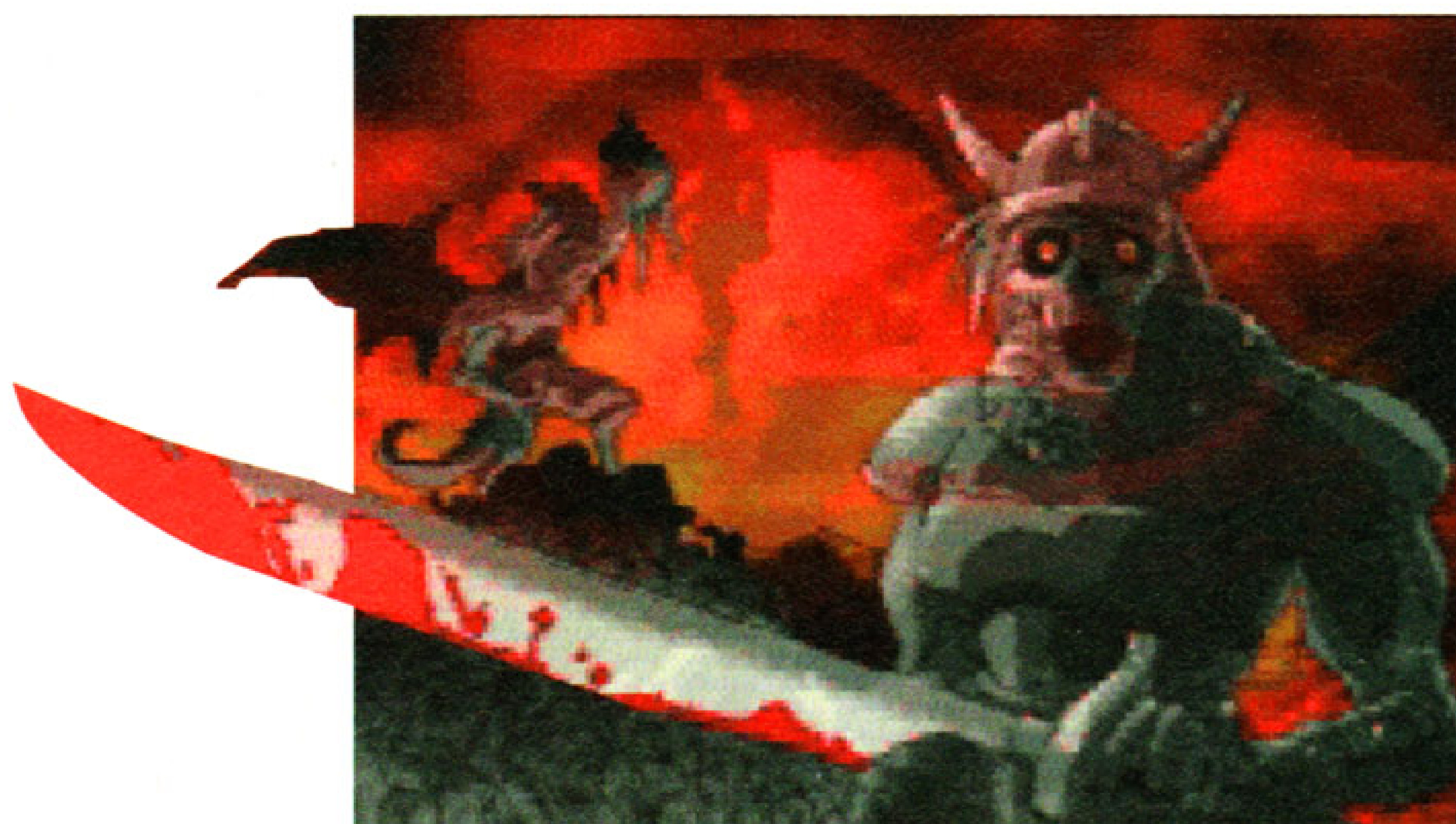


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Introducing...

DRAGON FORCE









Dragon Force successfully marries the plot-lines that make role-playing adventures so cool, but mostly centres around commanding your troops, moving them around the map and coaxing them into battling the forces of evil. In its strategy element, it's more like a traditional wargame as opposed to a Command and Conquer style game.

RPGs are massive in Japan. A console's fate is more often than not judged on the strength of such games over there, which is doubtless why the Saturn is booming. Just check out Sega's awesome line-up with the ground-breaking Grandia not far from completion, Shining the Holy Ark on its way and now the mighty Dragon Force. It would appear that things are looking rosy indeed for RPG fans.

Dragon Force is the latest RPG to emerge from Sega and it's going to be massive. The game is set in the tranquil world of Legendra which has fallen prey to the evil terror of the demon Madruk. The once peaceful land has reduced to a place of horror and treachery, with the only hope of redemption resting firmly on your shoulders. As one of eight powerful warlords, your task is to gather together your fellow warlords into a united army to defeat once and for all the evil Madruk. Cue the opportunity for some huge battle scenes via the Command and Conquer-style point and click system. The battle scenes are awesome with the camera swooping about as up to 200 soldiers engage in battle at once with you in complete control of the ensuing action. If you don't like the way the battle is going you can change your tactics at a moments notice. Whether you decide to send in more archers, recall the infantry or even send in the magicians to cast a few spells, the choice is yours. Win and you'll become ruler of the land of Legendra, lose and the evil Madruk will decimate the land.

Here at SSM we've just taken delivery of the American version of the Dragon Force, which means that the massive amount of translation and so forth has already been done. Whether Sega license this version from the US based Working Designs (who did the translation) remains to be seen, but having a game like Dragon Force arriving for us Saturn owners can only be good news. Expect an update soon...

Role-playing game? Well kind of. In actual fact, Dragon Force is more of a strategy style of game... and it's very nice indeed.





Dear Newsagent,

I own a Saturn. There I've said it. That being the case, there is only one monthly magazine for me and that's SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE! You hear me? SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE! Put it aside continually on a monthly basis and I shall be most grateful.

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NEXT MONTH...

At the moment plans for the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE are only in their formulative stages. You can expect us to chase up the hottest Saturn stories: Quake, Duke Nukem 3D, Resident Evil and Last Bronx... and maybe we might find something out about Sega Touring Car on Saturn! Additionally, we have a cool AM3 interview lined up with the firm discussing their latest arcade game, Top Skater... Oh, and maybe a cover-mounted CD too. No promises, mind...

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, JULY ISSUE, OUT 11 JUNE.



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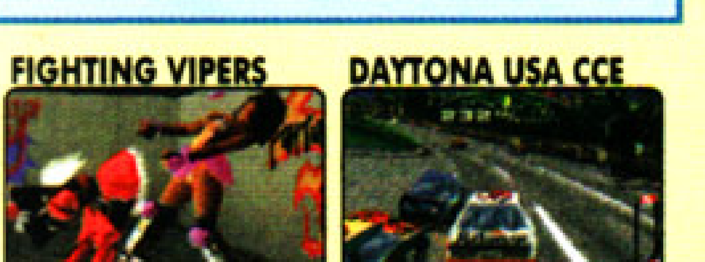
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2. DIE HARD TRILOGY
3. FIFA '97
4. SOVIET STRIKE
5. DARK SAVIOUR
6. DIE HARD ARCADE
7. THEME PARK
8. TOMB RAIDER
9. X MEN COTA
10. THUNDERHAWK 2

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